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MARCH 2004

WORLD SOCCER comment

FIFA celebrates its centenary this year. Prepare to be bombarded with celebratory events, from the unveiling of Pele's 100 greatest players (a list that will include, I kid you not, Roy Keane) to the more controversial staging of an exhibition match in Paris between France and Brazil two days before the 2004 FA Cup Final.

So now is as good a time as any to question the role of football's governing body in the 21st century. FIFA president Sepp Blatter never tires of repeating the mantra that his organisation acts "for the good of the game". For a sport that is constantly facing challenges from corporate business, agents, drugs and other such ills, surely it's reassuring to know that FIFA is on the frontline, defending the honour of our game.

Strangely, though, I don't feel that confident. Two examples from the past month alone demonstrate this. The story of how FIFA has allowed the use of protective headguards to enter the game (page 8) is alarming. There is still time to act, though, just as there is still time to scrap plans for the 'Club World Championship' in 2005.

FIFA has watched jealously as UEFA's Champions League has grown in stature until it stands second only in importance to the World Cup. Now, with complete disregard for 'the good of the game', Blatter wants a share of the spoils. Presumably, he hopes the 'Club World Championship' will one day rival the Champions League in sporting and financial terms.

To the charges of jealousy and arrogance, we must add that of hypocrisy. This, remember, is the same Sepp Blatter who has been calling for all domestic leagues to be reduced to 16 teams in order to cut fixture congestion and help prevent player fatigue.

Blatter claims the 'Club World Championship' will boost the development of Asian and African football. How humiliation at the hands of wealthy European teams will aid that process is beyond me. The only people who will benefit will be the handful of European superclubs who see such tournaments as an opportunity to sell their 'brand' to another 'market'.

The centenary spotlight is now burning bright on FIFA. Ultimately, it must decide whether it exists to act as the moral guardian of our game, or just to massage the ego of its president and his acolytes.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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WS WORLD SOCCER Paul Gardner

Who protects the

Innovation...a player sports the Full90 headguard

Without any debate or discussion, FIFA has given the go-ahead to protective headguards. What sort of game does it really want?

BASIC football equipment has always begun with the letter S. Shoes, socks, shirts and shorts, that's what the rules said for decades. To that quartet another S was added in 1990: shinpads.

Things may be about to change – dramatically. Forget the S factor – here comes Protective Padding. You want to wrap your head or your elbows or your knees or your shoulders or maybe your entire body in bulky plastic covering? No problem. At the next World Cup Brazil could look like a foam-rubber version of a gridiron team. FIFA has given the OK.

In a surprise circular, No 863, issued on August 25 last year, FIFA general secretary Urs Linsi, responding to "correspondence from a number of national associations", announced a judgment from the International Football Association Board. "Modern protective equipment such as headgear, face masks, knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight, padded material" can be worn.

The reasoning, based on the wording of Rule IV, was that such devices are not considered dangerous to other players.

Circular 863 surprised and irritated some members of FIFA's own executive committee. According to CONCACAF representative Chuck Blazer: "This is a policy matter. Policy is decided by the executive committee, not by IFAB or the referees. It is my understanding that the executive committee is entrusted with protecting the game. Yet this never came before us."

Blazer's view is backed by FIFA vice-president Jack Warner, who detects marketing machinations at work. "Headgear is a whole new category and should be debated," he said. "This is definitely something for the executive committee to rule on. There are also economic issues here. Can all players afford equipment? And I do not like the idea of adapting a rule to the desire for commercial gain."

I'll get to the commercial aspect in a moment, after a slight detour. The reasoning behind the circular – i.e. that if something isn't specifically forbidden, then it's OK – did not appeal to me. I called FIFA and got nowhere. No one wished to speak about the matter, there was nothing more to say, it was all in the circular. Could FIFA at least tell me which national associations had sought guidance? No, they could not.

But I could guess pretty confidently one of them was the United States Soccer Federation. After some obligatory reluctance, the USSF said yes, they had enquired. Why? Because "we were getting enquiries from our affiliates".

At that time – last autumn – there were already a number of protective headband devices on the US market, most of them aimed specifically at youth.

It all figures. The USA is the world centre for lawsuits. If there is a danger of head injuries in soccer (and there clearly is) and if the authorities, be they local leagues or FIFA itself, are not doing all they can to minimise the danger (and they clearly have not), then court cases will inevitably follow.

Now for the commercial aspect. Off we go to San Diego to meet Jeff Skeen. A concussion sufferer himself – as has been his soccer-playing daughter – Skeen has built up a worthy reputation for designing helmets for cyclists.

He knows the technology of protective equipment. But more importantly than that he's a terrier, a won't-let-go guy who's not easily fobbed off. He introduced his soccer headguard, the Full90, then found that many referees were saying it wasn't permitted.

'I'm not doing this for financial gain. I'm unstoppable – I don't care who gets in my way because this benefits everyone'

Jeff Skeen, designer of the Full90 protective headgear

Skeen got on to everyone in sight, seeking help on issues regarding the rules and global politics, he employed a marketing company called Premier Partnerships. Not a bad idea – one of the company's co-owners is Alan Rothenberg, who as the USSF president who ran World Cup 94 in the USA and who now occupies a place on the FIFA 2006 World Cup organising committee, should have influence in high places.

game?

No doubt about it, Skeen has been heard. His run-in with the National Federation of State High Schools is instructive. Under NFSHS regulations, Full90 was banned. The NFSHS assistant director Tim Flannery was blunt about it, saying: "This is a new piece of equipment, and there is no standard for it…what concerns our rules body is will it create other problems? Will players with concussions be given a false sense of security? Will it make some players more aggressive?" He also pointed to the commercial angle. "They're trying to sell headbands, and we're just saying: 'Don't force us into it.' "

Many will find those objections reasonable. Skeen did not – insisting his product had been tested, and it was safe. He added: "When they forcibly remove a safety device from a kid's head and then there are subsequent injuries, those are grounds for a lawsuit. I'm confident they will see many lawsuits…they'll be flying."

Sudden capitulation

A warning? A threat, even? Whatever, the NFSHS suddenly capitulated and approved Full90 as optional equipment.

"A monumental day in the history of soccer," said Skeen. He has sold over 100,000 headguards at £21 a go, has agreements with many youth clubs and leagues and with the pro indoor league in the USA, plus endorsements from top women internationals. He also says that he has had a whole slew of distributor enquiries, including a number from England, Ireland and Scotland.

Heading itself is not the problem, says Skeen. The causes of most soccer concussions – many of which go unreported, he insists – are head-to-head and elbow-to-head clashes. For the Full90 headguard, he claims nothing more than that it will help reduce the number and the severity of concussions.

As someone who, for many years, has been drawing attention to the potential dangers of heading and head injuries in soccer, I am not about to belittle Skeen, but I part company with him when he claims that his headband will do its apparently beneficial work without altering the game itself.

Scepticism is in order when people start getting flowery. Listen to this: Full90's product incorporates "a deep appreciation for the heart and soul of an athlete as well as ▶

What's ahead?...how Rivaldo might look playing for Brazil if gridiron-style helmets are ever permitted

Banned...Cameroon's one-piece strip

S.O.S!

Save Our Soccer

FOOTBALL IS BEING slowly distorted by a variety of forces that see only short-term benefits and ignore the long-term damage hidden in their innovations.

Yet, FIFA – the ultimate bastion of true football values – sends out hopelessly muddled signals on the trend. There are many problems posed by headbands, a piece of equipment that FIFA has approved with little or no attention to potential problems.

What a difference when Cameroon wear one-piece kit – a relatively harmless fashion note. But here comes Sepp Blatter himself racing in to put the block on it.

This is Blatter, the sworn enemy of technology in football. Yet not a peep from him when Genk's coach rigs up his goalkeeper with an earpiece to take instructions (see page 54).

Until 1993, FIFA rules stated unequivocally that coaching from "the boundary lines" was forbidden. Under pressure from the coaches, FIFA dropped that ban, but limited the shouting to a "technical area" around the bench. A limitation that now, with earpieces and wireless communication, becomes meaningless.

How will that affect the development of young players? What sort of game will it produce on the field? Is anyone looking into those questions? Who, at FIFA, is taking an overall view of the game, who is protecting its subtleties, who is looking after its welfare as an enjoyable human activity? No one, I suggest.

Paul Gardner

absolute respect for the game they play". There's more, from Skeen: "I want this to be an integral and beautiful part of this wonderful sport...we employ people who know and respect the traditions of the game."

FIFA has recently jumped all over Cameroon and banned their one-piece strips – precisely because they do not fit the "traditional" definition of what constitutes soccer equipment. But it adopts a very different view on headbands. Can there be any doubt that it is the fear of legal action that accounts for the inconsistency?

FIFA compromise

FIFA is right to be fearful – because it has done so little itself to minimise the risk of concussion. There are two obvious courses of action: either ban heading or allow players to wear heavy protective helmets. Neither route being acceptable, we have the Full90 as a compromise – and accepted by FIFA with inexplicable rapidity and evidently with little consideration of what it will do to the game.

So far, at the adult level, most of Full90's marketing success has come with women players. The men resist. Asked to test a headguard, Lillestrom's Torgeir Bjarmann replied scornfully: "I will never play in this thing. I prefer my own head."

A similar attitude to the one that cyclists and ice-hockey players once had, says Skeen. Major League Soccer, he says, told him it would consider a sponsorship agreement, but doesn't want to be the one that introduces the headguard: "They told me it would hurt their chances of worldwide respect," said Skeen.

But, he adds, the men will come round. "We will have men in this year's Olympic Games wearing the Full90 product." Which team? "I can't tell you."

By drawing attention to, and smiling benignly on the matter of protective padding, FIFA has conjured up the image of the injury-proof player, legally padded and pillowed from head to foot.

My first objection to that – and it is not a frivolous one – is aesthetic. Part of the beauty of the Beautiful Game springs from seeing the human body in all sorts of athletic action. Grace and elegance are as important as power and size to the sport. I don't want to look at the human form made ugly by wads of plastic. Nor do I like the militaristic look headguards impose on a player's head.

Second objection: no one has any idea what the wearing of headguards by kids might do to their development. What sort of players would they become?

The third objection, perhaps the most weighty, is raised by Flannery of the NFSHS: that padding may make players more aggressive. Skeen scoffs at this idea, but he is dead wrong. A player secure in the knowledge that his padding will protect him from nasty bruises, maybe even a broken collar bone, is much more likely to play a rougher game.

Soccer will become more physical, giving an advantage to bigger players and seriously disturbing the sport's essential, but always precarious, balance between power and skill.

As the game gets rougher, a new generation of harder protective equipment will be called for. Anyone who doubts this progression should look at the photographs of American gridiron players from the 1920s. They wear very little padding, and as yet no helmets, just soft leather headgear. From that grew the hard helmets, the extensive face guards and the massive shoulder padding of today.

Brutal melees

Is that the direction FIFA – or anyone? – wishes soccer to take? Leading to an ironic retrogression back to the mid-19th century days of those brutal soccer-rugger melees?

The head injury problem will not go away. For a start Skeen will not allow it to. "I'm obnoxiously confident," he says. "I'm doing this to prevent or reduce concussions. I'm not doing this for financial gain. I'm unstoppable – I don't care who gets in my way because this is beneficial to everyone."

Skeen has all sorts of lab tests and medical evidence to support his claim the Full90 works. Definitive proof is lacking, but that hardly matters. We have a situation where there is a clear risk of head injuries, maybe brain injuries. So, as long as the headguard does no harm, it's like taking that daily dose of vitamins – doctors say that most of us don't need them, but they may help, so why not?

The arguments I have given above seem to me more than adequate to warrant saying 'no' to headguards. But FIFA has already conceded too much. Not only by too readily accepting virtually unrestricted padding but also by not taking a hard look at the current state of football to see whether anything can be changed in the way that the sport is played that would reduce the risk of head injuries.

Changes could be made that would not only reduce the risks, but – by eliminating most of the useless and dangerous heading – would also improve the quality of the game.

Skeen says: "In terms of head protection in soccer, the genie is out of the bottle. It's here to stay and to grow worldwide."

He is right – but the answer does not have to be headguards. The ball is at FIFA's feet.

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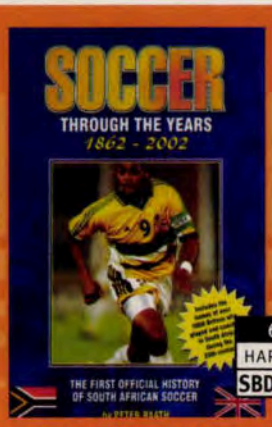

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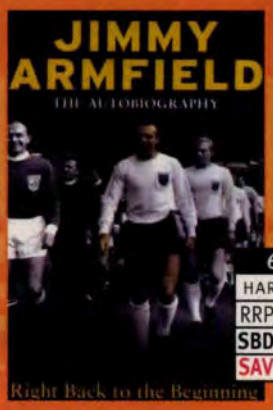

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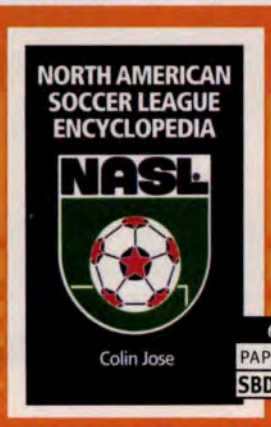

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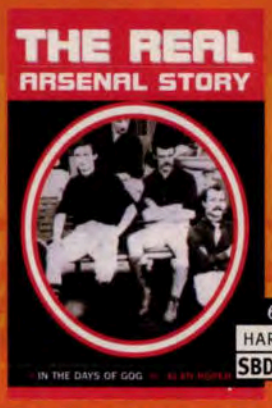

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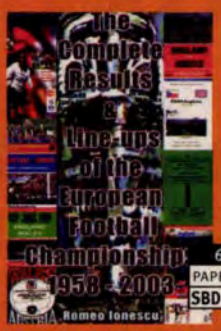

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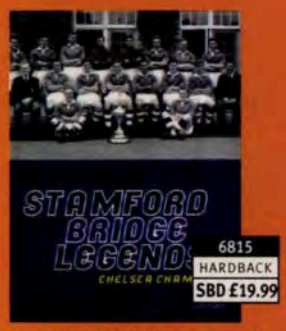

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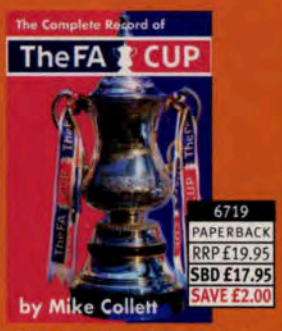

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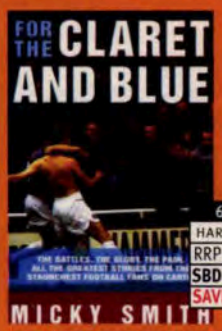

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WSoccMAR03

Ruud Gullit is named as coach of Feyenoord for next season

05/01/04

Andrii Shevchenko scores both goals as Milan record a crucial 2-1 win away at Italian League leaders Roma

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United Arab Emirates go down 3-1 to Bahrain in the Gulf Cup in Kuwait

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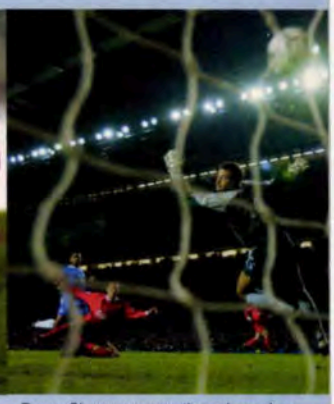


Bruno Cheyrou scores the only goal as Liverpool beat Chelsea at Stamford Bridge

07/01/04

HEADLINERS

ROCK OF GIBRALTAR

Prize-winning racehorse that could unseat Sir Alex Ferguson

THIS IS A TALE of legal writs and multi-million pound stud fees, private detectives and off-the-record briefings. It began as an argument over a racehorse, but it has quickly escalated into a crisis which could bring down Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, the most powerful club coach in world football.

Rock of Gibraltar is the record-breaking racehorse who is half 'owned' by Ferguson and has now been retired to stud. It is the potential stud fees of up to £200 million from the horse's new career that have caused an almighty row which may only be settled in the Irish High Court.

'Ferguson has picked a fight with the most powerful and feared partnership in racing'

Ferguson, by issuing a writ against Irish billionaire John Magnier for his 'half-share' in the horse, has picked a fight with the most powerful and feared partnership in racing.

Magnier and his business partner J P McManus command respect throughout the racing world. Just like Ferguson in football, they are used to getting their own way. And when Magnier and McManus, the so-called Coolmore Mafia, get mad, they get even.

Magnier and McManus, through their company Cubic Expression, are also Manchester United's single biggest shareholder, owning at the last count 25.49 per cent of United PLC.

Last month, they started to flex their corporate muscles. They demanded that the offer of a new four-year contract to Ferguson be dropped and replaced with a one-year rolling contract. The board agreed.

They presented the board with 99 questions about the conduct of United officials in a host of recent transfer deals. They were also reported to have hired Knoll Associates, private detectives, to dig up dirt on Ferguson, and in particular, his son Jason's activities as an agent. Jason has said he may now quit football. Ferguson senior said it was all very "distressing".

So where will it end?

Initially, Ferguson and racing seemed perfect partners. Magnier and McManus got a new celebrity buddy; Ferguson got a new hobby; and racing could boast a new high-profile endorser. Magnier and McManus bought up six per cent of United shares and the possibility was raised that they could launch a takeover of United and install Ferguson as chairman.

Now, it seems, Magnier and McManus could indeed launch a takeover of the club – with the intention of getting rid of Ferguson as manager.

● *See Jim Holden, page 18.*

Freddie Kanoute is cleared by FIFA to play for Mali

08/01/04

In Spain, Deportivo La Coruna and Racing Santander draw 1-1 the day after League leaders Valencia beat Albacete 1-0

11/01/04

Saudi Arabia celebrate retaining the Gulf Cup having beaten Yemen in their final match of the round-robin competition

11/01/04

ISSA HAYATOU

The Cameroonian was re-elected as president of the Confederation of African Football. He routed fellow FIFA executive committee member Ismail Bhamjee of Botswana by 46 votes to six at the CAF Congress before the Nations Cup finals.

CARLOS TEVEZ

Voted South America's Player of the Year in a poll of Latin American journalists organised by Uruguay's *El Pais* newspaper. The Boca Juniors and Argentina Olympic team forward, only 19, collected 73 votes, well clear of last year's winner, Toluca and Paraguay's Jose Cardozo (39), with Santos and Brazil's Diego (33) third.

DAVID SEAMAN

The ex-Arsenal and England keeper announced his retirement from football with immediate effect because of a recurrent shoulder injury. Seaman, 40, made over 1,000 appearances, including 75 for England. He played his last game, for Manchester City, on January 10.

LIAM MILLER

Amid the hullabaloo over Louis Saha and Rock of Gibraltar, Manchester United's pre-contract agreement with Celtic midfielder Liam Miller went almost unnoticed. The 22-year-old Irishman turned down a £1million-a-year offer at Celtic Park and instead will join United on a free transfer on July 1.

CARLOS BIANCHI

Continued Boca Juniors' domination of South America's annual awards by being voted Coach of the Year for the fifth time. Bianchi collected 89 votes ahead of Cruzeiro's former Brazil boss Vanderlei Luxemburgo (42) and Ecuador's Colombian coach Hernan Dario Gomez (11).

JOSE ANTONIO REYES

Spanish sensation tops transfer window spending chart

At £17.5million from Sevilla, Jose Antonio Reyes is easily Arsenal's record signing. The fee, even though it will be spread over a number of years, also makes him the most expensive of the winter transfer window deals.

The deal that took Reyes to Highbury was negotiated by vice-chairman David Dein, who encountered Sevilla fans' anger at first hand. "I felt I was in the middle of a riot zone," he said. "There were hundreds of people chanting his name."

Reyes' precocious talent is well known to *World Soccer* readers (Talent Scout, November 2003), but he must overcome the poor record of Spanish players overseas if he is to succeed. With that in mind, Arsenal have included 40 return flights to Seville a year in his contract.

Nevertheless, for an initial £10.5m, Arsenal have signed one of the brightest talents in the European game, one who, crucially, is eligible for this season's Champions League.

The lack of eligible players contributed to a remarkably uneventful transfer window. England's other Champions League hopefuls, Man United and Chelsea, signed Louis Saha (Fulham) and Scott Parker (Charlton) respectively.

Italy's biggest deal was Adriano's move from debt-ridden Parma to Inter, who already owned a half-share. In Spain, Edgar Davids joined Barcelona on loan from Juventus, with an option to make the move permanent.

FRANZ BECKENBAUER

Kaiser claims victory over World Cup ticket prices

Franz Beckenbauer has a track record of success that stretches back to the mid-1960s. But the latest, in which he takes particular satisfaction, is on behalf of fans and courtesy of his role as leader of Germany's organising effort for the 2006 World Cup finals.

Beckenbauer says: "My big concern was not the redevelopment of our stadia or the cultural programmes or the infrastructure – these were all issues that have been well in hand for some time. But what was most important to me was in persuading FIFA we should lower ticket prices for the ordinary fans compared with the last World Cup.

"It took time but we finally got them to agree on a fourth category of ticket at 35 euros [£25] for no fewer than 48 of the 64 games. OK, for a lot of fans that may still seem expensive, but for the majority who want to come to the last European World Cup for we don't know how long, I think it's within reach.

"I'm really proud we can say our World Cup will not be just for the rich but one that the ordinary fan in the street can afford to attend."

Edgar Davids is presented as a Barcelona player after his loan move from Juventus

12/01/04

David Seaman announces his retirement from playing because of injury

13/01/04

Santos Laguna beat Atlas 4-3 on penalties after a 2-2 draw in a Mexican Libertadores Cup play-off

14/01/04

Premiership bottom club Wolves beat leaders Man United 1-0 in the upset of the weekend

17/01/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Mediawatch

News and views from the world's press. Compiled by Keir Radnedge

"Nicolas Anelka has about as much chance of a recall to France's attack as he has of winning a stage of the next Tour de France."
– *Vincent Duluc in* L'Equipe, *considering how the holders may cover for suspended Djibril Cisse at Euro 2004.*

"Davids played a key role in tightening up the Barcelona midfield and inspiring a renewed belief in the ability to qualify for the Champions League next season."
– *Joaquin Poqui in* Mundo Deportivo *after the Dutchman scored in a 5-0 thrashing of Albacete.*

Sparking debate...new Barça signing Davids (left)

"The signing of Davids is inadequate, unnecessary and will prove unproductive because Barcelona need something more than a player whose value is on the way down."
– *Ex-Spain midfielder Michel on the day Barça signed Edgar Davids on loan.*

"The problem with this tawdry affair is that its soap opera elements, while undeniably compelling in a *Dallas* sort of way, deflect attention from the serious issue to which John Magnier liberally alluded in his 99 questions to the United board. Although the club may have nothing to hide, football in general is permeated by corruption, much of it legitimate under the game's regulations."
– The Sunday Telegraph's *Patrick Barclay delving into the murky depths of Sir Alex Ferguson's horse-trading.*

"No match since the last World Cup has been awaited as eagerly as Morocco's 1-0 win over Nigeria at the Nations Cup."
– *Hadari Salem getting carried away in* L'Opinion.

Speaking out...

IVAN HELGUERA was fined by Real Madrid for comments, made during a routine press conference, about the club's departures last summer. Helguera said: "Since Makelele left we don't have anyone who can fulfil his role defensively because much as Beckham works, he isn't defensive. We need a midfielder who wins the ball...Hierro left and people said he was slow; now they say we don't have anyone that brings the ball out from the back – something at which he was superb. We miss him... Karanka left and I don't know why we let him go. Now we need a centre-back but we used to have two centre-backs who were perfect."

SEPP BLATTER said the women's game should feature "more feminine uniforms...Tighter shorts, for example." The FIFA president told Swiss paper *SonntagsBlick*: "Pretty women are playing football today. Excuse me for saying that."

PATRICK VIEIRA told *The Times* that Real Madrid made Arsenal an offer for him last summer, but he turned them down.

So farewell then...

LEONIDAS DA SILVA, the Brazilian international striker and man credited with inventing the bicycle kick, has died in Cotia, near Sao Paulo, at the age of 90. Known as the 'Rubber Man' because of his astounding dribbling skills, Leonidas (pictured) was top scorer in the 1938 World Cup with eight goals. In total, he scored 21 goals in 19 official games for his country.

MIKLOS FEHER, the 24-year-old Hungarian international, collapsed and died, reportedly from heart failure, during Benfica's game away to Guimaraes. *See Portugal, page 25; Hungary, page 61.*

ALLY MACLEOD, manager of Scotland's 1978 World Cup squad, has died aged 72. MacLeod, a former manager of Ayr, famously raised Scottish hopes before the tournament by claiming that his side would win the trophy.

BOB STOKOE, manager of the Sunderland side that beat Leeds in the 1973 FA Cup Final, has died aged 73. Stokoe, famous for wearing a trilby, knee-length mac and tracksuit bottoms, spent 13 years as a player with Newcastle.

Atletico Madrid overcome Sevilla 2-1 in La Liga

18/01/04

Alessandro Del Piero and Gianluca Zambrotta celebrate as Juventus beat Siena 4-2

18/01/04

United States draw 1-1 with a second-string Denmark side in a friendly in Carson, California

18/01/04

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

TEAM OF THE MONTH – JANUARY 2004

La Gazzetta dello Sport · don balon · kicker · SPORT-EXPRESS · FOOT · WORLD SOCCER · A BOLA · voetbal INTERNATIONAL · FANATIK · TIPS bladet

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Cafu (Milan), Anderson Polga (Sporting Lisbon), Terry (Chelsea), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Figo (Real Madrid), Rui Costa (Milan), Kaka (Milan); Shevchenko (Milan), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Henry (Arsenal)

FANATIK (TUR)
Dida (Milan); Mexes (Auxerre), Terry (Chelsea), Lequi (Atletico Madrid); Vieira (Arsenal), Nedved (Juventus), Aimar (Valencia), Kaka (Milan), Cheyrou (Liverpool); Henry (Arsenal), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)
Dida (Milan); Toure (Arsenal), Nesta (Milan), Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Reveillere (Lyon); Giuly (Monaco), Xabi Alonso (Real Sociedad), Kaka (Milan), Reyes (Sevilla); Trezeguet (Juventus), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)
Juanma (Atletico Madrid); Cafu (Milan), Maldini (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Karpin (Real Sociedad), Pirlo (Milan), Zidane (Real Madrid), Downing (Middlesbrough); Henry (Arsenal), Shevchenko (Milan), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Lequi (Atletico Madrid), Nesta (Milan), Raul Bravo (Real Madrid); Parker (Charlton), Kaka (Milan), Vieira (Arsenal), Albelda (Valencia), Henry (Arsenal); Totti (Roma), Trezeguet (Juventus)

DON BALON (SPA)
Dida (Milan); Mancini (Roma), Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Cole (Arsenal); Giuly (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Kaka (Milan), Luque (Deportivo La Coruna); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid), Henry (Arsenal)

FOOT (BLG)
Lehmann (Arsenal); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Nesta (Milan), Maldini (Milan); Giuly (Monaco), Totti (Roma), Vieira (Arsenal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Pauleta (PSG), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Henry (Arsenal)

KICKER (GER)
Butelle (Metz); Izquierdo (Osasuna), Terry (Chelsea), Pancaro (Milan); Mancini (Roma), Karpin (Real Sociedad), Kaka (Milan), Vieira (Arsenal), Cheyrou (Liverpool); Saha (Fulham), McCarthy (FC Porto)

TIPS-BLADET (DEN)
Given (Newcastle); Rodriguez (Monaco), Woodgate (Newcastle), Maldini (Milan); Baraja (Valencia), Kaka (Milan), Vieira (Arsenal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Nihat (Real Sociedad), Henry (Arsenal), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Howard (Manchester United); Samuel (Roma), Maldini (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Kaka (Milan), Cheyrou (Liverpool), Muntari (Udinese), Lachuer (Auxerre); Shevchenko (Milan), Henry (Arsenal), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

Notes & quotes

"All of a sudden because of a private matter about a racehorse it is all coming out. It's very distressing when it starts affecting your family like this. You have to wonder why they're attacking my family."
Alex Ferguson concedes that his dispute with John Magnier is having wider repercussions.

"Italian football is in a state of emergency."
With Parma and Lazio in dire financial straits, Italian federation president Franco Carraro sounds the alarm bell.

Ego problem...Depor coach Irureta

"In Spain we have no culture of rotating the players in the first team. Here, the egos of the players are too dominant."
Deportivo La Coruna coach Javier Irureta advocates more mixing and matching.

"Football is the one thing in Congo that binds the people together as a nation. As captain I realise I have a huge responsibility."
Lomana Lua Lua, the day before he was sent off against Tunisia in the African Nations Cup.

Norway, in their first match under new coach Aage Hareide, beat Sweden 3-0 in the Carlsberg Cup in Hong Kong

22/01/04

Milan head for the Italian Cup semi-finals after beating Roma 2-1 in Rome

22/01/04

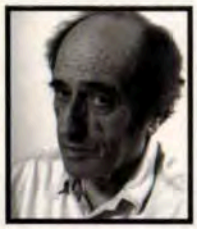
Den Haag celebrate a surprise 1-0 away win over fourth-placed AZ Alkmaar in Holland

23/01/04

The opening ceremony of th finals is staged in Rades

24/01/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville



...on Bolton's FA Cup betrayal ...the FA's grovelling approach...Facchetti's Inter challenge...agent intrigue at Old Trafford...why Trap would not suit Spurs

HOW sad it was to see Bolton Wanderers wilfully and wantonly betray a great tradition by fielding no fewer than nine reserves in the FA Cup third-round replay at home to modest Tranmere Rovers.

As we know, they lost 2-1 after extra-time, and Sam Allardyce, their manager, once the uncompromising Bolton centre-half, added fuel to the flames by saying how glad he was, given his club's obligations in the Premiership and in the League Cup.

It is quite understandable that Bolton should be desperate to stay in the Premiership, between which and the Nationwide First Division they have run a kind of shuttle service, while the League Cup – they meet Middlesbrough in the Final in Cardiff on February 29 – has a pot of potential gold at the end in the shape of the UEFA Cup. But I still found Bolton's sacrifice distressing.

For Wanderers have an FA Cup pedigree that goes back to the very first Wembley Final; that of 1923, when anything up to 200,000 fans swarmed into the stadium, marshalled by the famous policeman on the white horse, crowding the very touchlines.

Let us, though, admit no comparison with Manchester United's withdrawal, even as holders, from the 2000 competition, to compete in the ludicrous Blatteresque so-called Club World Championship in Brazil.

They bowed to the immense despicable pressure put on them by the government – the egregious sports minister Tony Banks to the fore – and the craven FA, both terrified that were United not to go, then England wouldn't be allotted the 2006 World Cup. Which they weren't, anyway.

WHY must the Football Association keep grovelling to England's presumptuous players? After their outrageous threats to strike over Rio Ferdinand's very proper exclusion from the squad to meet Turkey in Istanbul, the voluble Gary Neville and the rest should simply have been told to behave themselves. Instead, Neville himself was one of a delegation that worked out a deal whereby there would be joint discussions of whether a player subject to disciplinary action should be eligible for selection. So much for the iron rule of the new FA chief executive, Mark Palios. Shades of the over-mighty barons of the Middle Ages who dared to challenge the king.

GIACINTO FACCHETTI is someone I've known and liked for some 40 years. A famous and formidable left-back for Internazionale and Italy, he was, by Franz Beckenbauer's own admission, the inspiration of his concept of the role of the attacking sweeper. Looking at Facchetti thundering through from left-back to score goals with his right foot, the German asked himself why he couldn't do the same from the libero position. And did. Once when I told Facchetti that a certain English full-back was attacking as he did, he demanded: "But does he score goals?"

Now he has been handed the poisoned chalice of the Inter presidency, replacing the much-battered Massimo Moratti, sick and tired of the fans' bitter, unending criticism. The last straw for him and them was the 1-0 defeat at San Siro by humble Empoli in injury-time.

But what kind of president could straightforward, uncomplicated Facchetti be? No more, surely, than a front man, for the money is Moratti's – assuming he continues to stay – or, more accurately, the money came from his father Angelo, *Il gran petrolifero*, the great oil man, millions of which have been spent on transfer fees and salaries by his son, to limited effect.

'It is understandable that Bolton desperately want to stay in the Premiership but they have still wilfully betrayed a great FA Cup tradition'

Facchetti, who has for many years now been part of the hierarchy at Inter, allegedly fell out badly with a fellow member of Inter's successful 1960s team, Sandro Mazzola, who eventually left the club. But if Facchetti is surely well off, equally surely he is

African Nations Cup
stadium in Tunis

Brazil-born Francileudo dos Santos scores the winner in Tunisia's 2-1 victory over Rwanda

24/01/04

Egypt grab a 2-1 win over Zimbabwe after Peter Ndlovu had given the Zimbabweans the lead

25/01/04

hardly rich in the Moratti sense. One sees his role as that of a lightning conductor, a man greatly respected by the fans, who will ideally be expected not to blame the owner when things, inevitably, go wrong. If they do, it would worry him immensely, for he is *nerazzuro* to the core.

There are parallels, not least with Milan, who once had another former star, Gianni Rivera, as their president. At Juventus, Roberto Bettega has become, since retirement from playing, a senior executive, but again, the money comes, as it always has, from the Agnelli family.

Facchetti's presidential debut did not augur well. Things began promisingly at unfashionable Modena, with Alvaro Recoba putting Inter ahead after 10 minutes. But they lost the initiative, Modena made it 1-1 and could well have run out winners.

WHAT possessed Manchester United to declare that the obscure Swiss agent Gaetano Marotta was paid £139,000 for "helping" to secure a work permit for the USA keeper Tim Howard? It transpires that almost all the money was passed on to the Monaco-based agent Mike Morris, a very close associate of Jason Ferguson, son of Alex, of the Elite Sports Group agency.

For some two years I was a member of the appeals committee of the Department of Employment which decided such work permit questions. The FA, the Professional Footballers' Association and the Premiership were all represented. No agent ever came near us. For me, Howard, after his prowess in the 2003 Confederations Cup, would have had a cast-iron case. By no stretch of the imagination could Marotta have played a part. No possible such payment could remotely be justified.

Risible indeed is the claim by United that Alex Ferguson plays no part in "financial and contractual affairs". That the formidable John Magnier and J P McManus should have ridiculed the notion of a mere internal inquiry was predictable.

'Trapattoni for Tottenham? His strategies have always been cautious, while Spurs fans crave success with sparkling football'

'TRAP' for Tottenham? Somewhat hard to equate the arrival of Italy's coach, Giovanni Trapattoni, at White Hart Lane with the declaration by the Spurs chairman, Daniel Levy, that the new manager will speak English.

Trap doesn't, but then his rudimentary knowledge of German – there was a famous, confusing rant on television once in his Bundesliga days – didn't stop him winning a title while in charge at Bayern Munich.

More to the point, perhaps, is that Trap's strategies have always been cautious; indeed, during the last World Cup, when Italy sunk like a stone, his players complained about it.

But Spurs fans traditionally not only crave success, which has eluded the club for so long, but also yearn for sparkling football, the kind served up in bygone times by Arthur Rowe's push-and-run team, Bill Nicholson's Double winners, the FA Cup-winning side of Ardiles and Villa.

Trap, whom I've known since his Italy Under-21 days, might need more than fluent English to turn Tottenham around.

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

Notes & quotes

"The G-14 is a lobby group. Their opinion doesn't alarm us."
New UEFA general secretary Lars-Christer Olsson claims indifference to plans for Europe's heavyweight clubs to form their own competition.

"I'm not abandoning Inter. I'm still the owner."
Massimo Moratti steps down from the Internazionale presidency, though he will continue to write the cheques.

"I'd like to see Sepp Blatter wearing hot pants."
Canadian women's star Kara Lang reacts to comments from the FIFA president that women wear more feminine kit.

"Carlos was a symbol of Latin American football. He is to Colombia what Diego Maradona is to Argentina."
The Colombian star Carlos Valderrama is honoured by Real Madrid sports director Jorge Valdano.

National institution...Carlos Valderrama

Senegal are held to a goalless draw by Burkina Faso at the African Nations Cup

26/01/04

Morocco celebrate Youssef Hadji's late goal in the 1-0 win over Nigeria

27/01/04

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger presents Jose Antonio Reyes, Arsenal's record signing from Sevilla, to the media

30/01/04

Dortmund miss two penalties and lose 1-0 to a last-minute Schalke goal

30/01/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Jim Holden

How long has Sir Alex got?

Ferguson's days at United look to be numbered

SO, WHICH rumours do you believe? Fabio Capello to Chelsea? Ottmar Hitzfeld to the German national team? Sven Goran Eriksson for Real Madrid? Giovanni Trapattoni to Tottenham?

There is no transfer window for managers, not yet anyway, and just one of these coaching giants moving to a new job might spark a domino effect of high-level changes all round Europe.

Certainly, there is a strong sense of an impending explosion of activity.

The most intense spotlight, however, has been on the superstar manager most people cannot imagine working anywhere but the Old Trafford territory he has ruled with an iron will for nearly 20 years.

All round European football the same question is being whispered: What's happening to Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United?

An extraordinary story has developed during the past few months as a dispute with billionaire Irish businessman John Magnier about the ownership of champion racehorse Rock of Gibraltar has moved from being merely a bizarre sideshow to a confrontation threatening to destabilise the world's richest football club.

Remember the days when football used to be just a game? Ferguson does. But they must seem a long time ago even for a man who so passionately adores the sport that made him famous.

After months of speculation, Magnier finally played the power game at the end of last month, demanding an independent audit of United's transfer dealings and insisting that Ferguson receive only a one-year rolling extension to his contract rather than the three-year deal he was demanding.

For the first time in many years, the authority and influence of Ferguson at Old Trafford was successfully challenged.

The motive was to force him to back down from his legal challenge over Rock of Gibraltar's stud rights – which seems a commonsense retreat to most observers, myself included.

Football managers, even one as bold and brave and stubborn as Ferguson, do not play in the same league as ruthless financiers.

And no matter how much respect and admiration and loyalty he commands among the legions of Old Trafford fans, they would not want an essentially private feud to damage the fortunes of the club.

'Football managers, even one as bold and brave and stubborn as Ferguson, do not play in the same league as ruthless financiers'

A further twist to this incredible tale is that other rich men have been lying in the background, plotting quietly for a possible takeover that Magnier's large shareholding would facilitate.

American entrepreneur Malcolm Glazer snapped up 14.3 per cent of United's shares last November. He already owns the NFL side Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and has had talks with both the Irish camp and significant English money-men lurking with intent.

This was not just another conspiracy theory. This had become high-stakes reality.

Sir Alex should become the first man, player or manager, to be involved in 100 Champions League matches when Manchester United play away to FC Porto this month.

I hope he does. It will be a formidable achievement worthy of the celebration UEFA will doubtless lavish on an extraordinary football character.

But I wouldn't like to gamble on Ferguson reaching 110 games.

Can he truly rule Old Trafford with the same invincible self-belief that lies at the core of his work now that his supreme power has been broken?

If he is forced out of Manchester United or, more likely, leaves of his own volition, the repercussions will be immense. If he wants to go elsewhere and seek revenge, every great club in Europe will chase him. And every other top coach from Capello to Eriksson to Martin O'Neill and Marcello Lippi will be in the sights of Manchester United.

Just watch the merry-go-round whirl then – all the kings of football jumping off one horse and on to another when the music stops.

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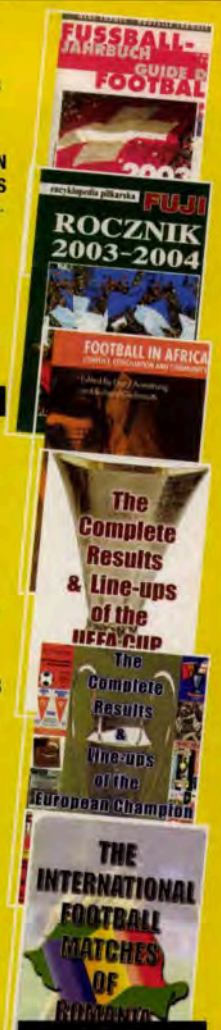

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Talking Tosh

The man they call John Benjamin is back on the La Liga merry-go-round

SID LOWE in Madrid

NOT FOR THE first time, they spoke too soon. At the halfway point of the season, with Valencia crowned 'winter champions', Madrid sports daily *Marca* gleefully lauded Spain's footballing stability.

The reason? Just two managerial sackings in the first half of the season – the best record in living memory. In 18 matches, only Mallorca's Jaime Pacheco and Espanyol's Javier Clemente were given the boot, replaced by Luis Aragones and Luis Fernandez respectively. It was, they reckoned, a sure sign of a more mature approach in the country's boardrooms, another indication that the electric chairs had been unwired, that Spanish football was getting even stronger.

Oops. Just three games later and there is a rather different landscape. Paco Flores has been sacked by Zaragoza, as has Joaquin Peiro by Murcia and Miguel Angel Lotina by Celta.

Meanwhile, the pressure has eased on Betis's Victor Fernandez, apparently halfway out the door, thanks to an excellent start to 2004. And a surprise (and extremely flattering) 5-0 victory over Albacete rescued Frank Rijkaard, whose Barcelona continue to falter and were knocked out of the Spanish Cup by Zaragoza, under the new management of Victor Munoz.

The latter's new counterpart at Celta is Raddy Antic, while John Toshack has returned to Spain as boss of Murcia. Those appointments seemed again to confirm that Spanish football has (or, rather, its chairmen think it has) an extremely limited pool of coaches. For, along with some other long-standing heavyweight names – like Aragones and Clemente – Antic, Toshack and Munoz seem always to be in the frame for Spain's self-repeating managerial merry-go-round.

Far from maturing or modernising, old attitudes prevail; there seems to be a reluctance to try new managers, to trust those who have cut their teeth at a lower level – even though many of those

Listen when I talk to you ...Toshack has a daunting task to save Murcia

who have made the step up, such as Valencia's Rafa Benitez and Joaquin Caparros at Sevilla, have done extremely well.

Murcia mentality

Murcia are a good example of a generalised mentality. Last season their aim was Second Division survival but eccentric manager David Vidal somehow took them to the title. Yet the Samper brothers who own the club, not trusting Vidal's lack of First Division experience, opted instead for Joaquin Peiro, under whom Murcia won just one game in 20 until Toshack's arrival.

The decision to re-employ Toshack caused the biggest stir of the managerial appointments. The Welshman is something of a legend in Spain – for good and bad. Not least because people just can't understand him or his name. The Spanish, who have two surnames (one from each parent) but tend to use just one, have adopted Toshack's middle name, Benjamin, as his first surname, making him John Benjamin. Or just plain JB. JB rather suits him, for the one thing that really sets Toshack apart here is the way in which he has been so spectacularly misunderstood, thanks to his literal translation of English idioms that mean nothing in Spanish.

Like the time he said that criticism was like "water off a duck's back" and the infamous "flying pig" comment that got him sacked at Real Madrid and inspired *Marca's* now legendary cartoon of an airborne piggy over the Bernabeu. Or his game of two halves description: "In the first half we were like chickens with our heads cut off, and the ball was a hot potato," he announced to a bemused media. "But in the second we were like chickens with our heads held high and the ball had cooled down."

Toshack has a long history in Spain. Thirteen years under his belt, he has managed Real Sociedad three times, rescuing them from relegation during his last stint, and Real Madrid twice. During his first stay, in 1989-90, Madrid broke the League goalscoring record with 107. He has also coached at Deportivo La Coruna.

Occasionally abrasive, Toshack has his enemies. He was brought in to provide an iron fist and control the supposedly off-the-rails Madrid dressing-room in 1999, but it did not work. And he it was who once said Real Sociedad's weekend line-up would consist of "the same 11 arseholes that played last week". Toshack, in short, is a manager who winds people up, cajoles aggressively, organises forcefully and really works his players into the ground. One bitter player called him a "dictator".

That kind of methodology doesn't always go down well in Spain, where despising hard, tactical 'anti-football' – like that supposedly played in Italy – is an obsession. Especially now that Spain, in deference to the current Madrid model and as a backlash against Barça's notoriously inflexible Louis Van Gaal, is fast becoming a country where managers who impose upon their players, use a notebook or seek defensive stability are treated with suspicion.

That unpleasant man

It doesn't help that Toshack refuses to play the media's game and speaks with a British accent. Presenting the sports headlines on the news, Antena3's J J Santos sneered: "Murcia's new manager is John Benjamin Toshack. Yes, you heard right: Toshack, *el antipatico* [that unpleasant man]."

Murcia are eight points from safety, so it is probably too late. But Toshack can alter mentalities, provoke a reaction from his players, and impose much-needed shape. His hands-on approach has already paid some dividends, Murcia winning only their second game of the season in Toshack's second match, helped especially by new signing Pipa Gancedo from Osasuna.

The most explosive transfer window move was, of course, the departure of Jose Antonio Reyes for Arsenal, but there has been plenty of in-bound activity. Gancedo was joined at Murcia by Barça keeper Roberto Bonano and defender Ivan Hurtado, while a Spanish Cup disaster for goalkeeper German Burgos prompted Atletico Madrid to sign Sergio Aragoneses from Second Division Getafe, as well as Uruguayan forward Ruben Olivera from Juventus.

Among the other significant moves, Celta signed Partizan Belgrade's Sasa Ilic, superb against Real Madrid in this year's Champions League; Mallorca picked up Finidi George; Zaragoza made two potentially excellent signings in Jose Movilla from Atletico and Barcelona striker Dani; and the Catalans themselves captured Edgar Davids from Juventus.

Their city rivals, second-bottom Espanyol, have picked up Coventry's Mustapha Hadji, Liverpool's Gregory Vignal and Romanian striker Claudiu Raducanu.

The latter had a mixed debut, throwing his shirt into the crowd after scoring the only goal of the game against Villarreal. The fans reached forward to catch his rather short delivery and the metal barrier gave way, sending them crashing face-first to the floor a couple of metres below. Fortunately, the casualties were minor.

● Atletico Madrid's Touche got more than he bargained for when he made his debut against Sevilla. Sevilla defender Pablo Alfaro marked the newcomer rather more closely than could be reasonably expected.

Alfaro is also a qualified doctor, and *Marca's* Roberto Palomar needed no prompting when he wrote: "He is so dedicated as to carry out a rectal examination in the middle of a match. That's a real urologist, always on call. You go up for a corner and suddenly he's checking your prostate."

Where does it hurt?...Touche touched

'We were like chickens with our heads cut off, and the ball was a hot potato'

Typical Toshack football-speak that bemused the Spaniards

Backseat driver

Moratti resigns the Inter presidency but remains as the club's main benefactor – for now

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

FOR CONTRASTING REASONS, it was the two Milan clubs that stole the headlines in the initial weeks of 2004. While Milan motored to the top of Serie A, inflicting an embarrassing hat-trick of League and Cup defeats on title rivals Roma along the way, city cousins Internazionale were busy writing yet another chapter in their seemingly never-ending soap opera 'The Moratti Years'.

It was relegation battlers Empoli who inadvertently prompted the latest Inter crisis when they recorded their first ever win at the San Siro. The 1-0 victory, thanks to a late goal from Tommaso Rocchi, almost certainly sounded the death knell for Inter's faltering title challenge, given that it was their third loss in four outings.

Yet it was to the surprise of many that the defeat prompted Inter's major shareholder, petrol millionaire Massimo Moratti, to resign the presidency of the club. Inevitably, this set off alarm bells because, even though Moratti stressed he was relinquishing his role as chief executive not as owner, many speculated that this might be the thin end of the wedge. What if the Moratti family were simply to pull out of Inter and football altogether?

For there can be no doubt that Inter badly need the Moratti millions. Without the breaks conceded by the controversial 'debt-spread' legislation introduced last spring (allowing Italian clubs to write off losses re depreciation of players over a 10-year rather than 12-month period), Inter would have returned annual losses last June of £210million.

Furthermore, in the eight years since buying Inter, Moratti has spent some £350m on an array of players, including Roberto Carlos, Paul Ince, Javier Zanetti, Aron Winter, Ronaldo, Diego

Cast down...Inter have won only the 1998 UEFA Cup during Massimo Moratti's tenure despite spending £350m on a host of top players such as Christian Vieri

● Off the field, the vexed question of drugs featured throughout much of January. At the start of the month Inter's Sierra Leone striker Mohamed Kallon and Perugia's little-used midfielder Al-Saadi Ghaddafi received eight- and three-month bans respectively for having tested positive for growth hormone nandrolone.

There were also two sessions of the ongoing 'Juventus Trial' in Turin. The trial, which began in January 2002, is the result of a five-year inquiry by Turin-based public prosecutor Raffaele Guariniello.

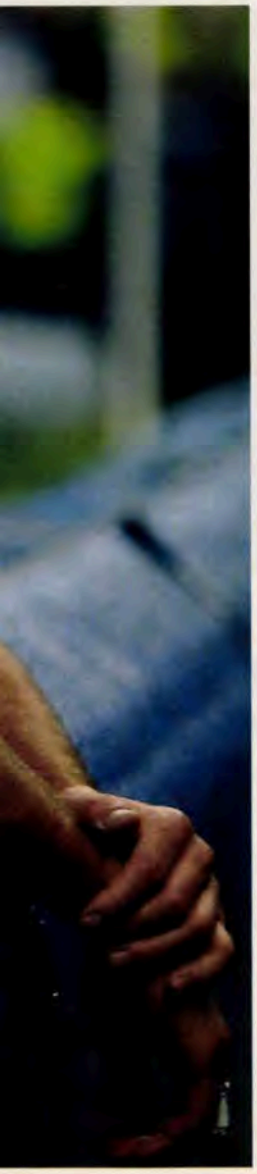
Two senior Juventus figures – director Antonio Giraudo and club doctor Ricardo Agricola – are accused of systematic doping practices. In particular, the prosecution charges focus on the alleged use (or misuse) of medical products (including Liposom, Lidocaina, Xylocaina, Bentelan, Deflan, Depo-medrol, Flebocortid, Tricortin 1000 and Samyr) which all feature on the International Olympic Committee's list of prohibited substances.

The prosecution case has also focused on why certain products normally used for patients with psychological problems or patients recovering from brain surgery were administered to healthy young athletes.

The trial has seen a veritable who's who of Juventus stars past and present called to testify, ranging from Gianluca Vialli and Fabrizio Ravanelli to Alessandro Del Piero and Zinedine Zidane. Notwithstanding occasional 'memory loss', nearly all the players have confirmed regular use of the restorative creatine as well as some of the other products named by the prosecution.

The next hearing of the Juventus case will be in early June, by which time all footballing minds will be concentrated on Euro 2004. Who knows if we will have heard more about drugs before then?

Testimony...Zinedine Zidane

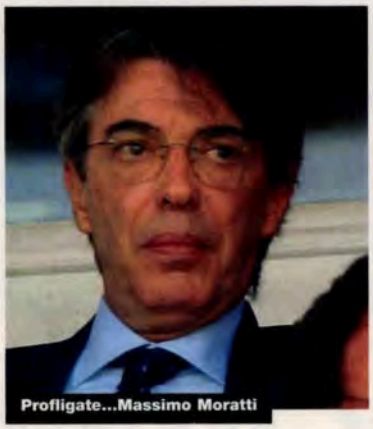


Simeone, Roberto Baggio, Andrea Pirlo, Clarence Seedorf, Christian Vieri, Laurent Blanc, Stephan Dalmat, Robbie Keane, Francesco Toldo, Adrian Mutu and Hernan Crespo. Of those, only Zanetti, Vieri and Toldo still ply their trade at Inter, while others such as Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo have moved on to achieve much more at Real Madrid.

A whole raft of coaches has also come and gone, with Ottavio Bianchi, Luis Suarez, Roy Hodgson, Gigi Simoni, Mircea Lucescu, Marcello Lippi, Marco Tardelli and Hector Cuper all having 'failed' at Inter since 1995.

Easily persuadable

The high turnover of both players and coaches is testament to some shoddy corporate governance. The feeling is that the affable Moratti has proved much too laid-back as a president, always too ready to heed the latest piece of advice offered by his wealthy entrepreneur friends and always too ready to cough up and purchase the latest wonderkid on the block.


Profligate...Massimo Moratti

It says much about Inter's lack of success in the Moratti years (they have won only the 1998 UEFA Cup under him) that even as successful a coach as Lippi could not make things work for him there. Here again, the suspicion remains that coaches at Inter simply do not feel they have the unqualified protection of the boss, but rather consistently fear that their position may be undermined by the latest setback.

While Moratti's resignation as president – to be replaced by in-house local legend Giacinto Facchetti – might have sent one signal, Inter's ever-profligate owner also sent another very clear one when it came to the January transfer window. Inter it was who landed the two most significant coups, namely Brazilian Adriano (£16m for Parma's half of the player the two clubs shared) and Serb Dejan Stankovic (£2.5m from Lazio).

Their arrival coincided with an apparent revival in fortunes, as Inter recorded a comprehensive 4-0 home win against Serie A debutants Siena on the first Sunday of February. This kept them in fourth place in the table, but still 13 points off the top. It is their late February derby clash with Milan that will be much more crucial to their prospects for the rest of the season.

When Inter go into that game, they will almost certainly be facing the current League leaders. During January Milan left behind them the disappointment of their penalty shoot-out defeat by Argentina's Boca Juniors in the World Club Cup Final the previous month, not to mention their first Serie A defeat of the season, at home to Udinese.

Six consecutive League wins (against Roma, Reggina, Brescia, Ancona, Siena and Bologna) put Milan top of the table, five points ahead of Roma and Juventus in joint second place. Not only that, but the run testified to the club's enviable squad strength and a crucial ability to take maximum points when not playing their best football. Milan iced the cake with victories in both legs of their Italian Cup quarter-final against Roma.

Roma's chance to rally

As always, the pressures created by the Champions League could yet play a significant part in the three-horse Serie A race. In that sense, Roma could still yet climb back top again if and when both Juventus and Milan lose vital energy should they enjoy an extended run in Europe (Juventus meet Deportivo La Coruna, while Milan play Sparta Prague in the Champions League second round). Remember, Roma are involved in the usually less arduous UEFA Cup, in which their next opponents are Turkish side Gaziantepspor.

'Moratti has seemed too ready to purchase the latest wonderkid'

Nearing completion...access roads under construction at the conceptual, crater-like Estadio Municipal in Braga, which will be spectator-free at both ends

Safety in numbers?

The stadiums are all in place, but concerns remain ahead of Euro 2004

PEDRO PINTO in Lisbon

WITH ALL 10 Euro 2004 stadiums already inaugurated, Portugal is feeling good about hosting the championship, which kicks off in Oporto on June 12.

However, many people believe there is one issue that organisers have failed to address properly – public safety.

Over three million people are expected to travel to the country for the tournament, but recently police and firefighters' chiefs caused a stir by announcing that they still lacked the planning, manpower and equipment to operate effectively at such a large event.

Fernando Curto, head of the National Association of Professional Firefighters, said there was a nationwide shortage of firemen, a problem that was exposed last summer when the country was menaced by its largest forest fires to date. Curto added that there had not been any specific training programmes for the tournament.

Security priority

The government has repeatedly stated that security is a priority, and that the police and firefighters will be ready to face all eventualities, but so far it has failed to convince the critics.

At a security seminar in January, the minister of internal affairs, Figueiredo Lopes, announced that the police would be reinforced

with an extra 900 officers and that the government still planned to spend around £11 million on safety measures for the championship.

Lopes said that a bill will be passed soon guaranteeing these funds, and that the money will be allocated to the proper authorities to ensure that nothing fails when the competition starts.

The head of the Euro 2004 security committee seems to trust the government. When confronted with the complaints by the different groups, Lieutenant-General Leonel de Carvalho told the media he believed they were "habitual" and that he is not preoccupied with the training of security forces or the distribution of equipment. Carvalho conceded that he was worried about the event, but only because it required his full attention, not because he feared something would go wrong.

Access problems

Another issue that has come to the fore in recent weeks is the state of the access roads and pedestrian walkways to the stadiums. Fans have complained that it takes too long to exit the arenas after matches, and that the passageways are far too narrow.

This problem was exposed after the Lisbon derby, when thousands of supporters took over an hour to leave the Luz stadium following Sporting's 3-1 victory over Benfica.

Portuguese fans are not known for their violent behaviour, and no scuffles erupted, but during the European Championship, the situation could well become problematic, with thousands of fans stuck in tight spaces.

Stadium officials defended themselves by claiming that not all of the construction is finished, and added that these problems would be addressed once all the pathways were fully functional.

Madail's ultimatum

However, this attitude did not satisfy Portuguese federation president Gilberto Madail, who sent out an ultimatum to the stadium owners warning that any complex that is not completely functional in the next few months could lose the right to host Euro 2004 matches. Harsh words from a man who expects nothing else but perfection during the tournament.

Meanwhile, Nuno Magalhaes, the secretary of state for internal affairs, guaranteed in a speech in Oporto last month that all matches will be handled as high-risk situations in light of the recent concerns about the authorities' ability to deal with the large crowds during the event.

Magalhaes stated that even the games where there are not expected to be any confrontations will be treated with the utmost respect and attention. In order to ensure this, he announced that all annual leave has been cancelled for national guard and state police during June and July. He hoped these measures, in conjunction with the government's investment in security, would help ensure there would be the highest levels of safety throughout the event.

So is there a reason for the public to be concerned about safety? The complaints from some of Portugal's emergency services are certainly not without foundation, but you would think, after recent developments, that the government and the organising committee would not jeopardise the security of the country and the millions of people visiting it just to save pennies. After all, there is such a lot at stake.

Emergency...Feher is taken to hospital

● January 25, 2004, will for ever be remembered as a dark day for Portuguese football. That was the date Benfica striker Miklos Feher collapsed during a First Division match at Guimaraes, dying shortly afterwards in hospital.

The cause of the Hungarian international's death was not immediately determined, but the initial tests led doctors to suspect the 24-year-old suffered a cardiac arrest. Several tributes were held in the days that followed, with Portuguese president Jorge Sampaio sending his condolences to the Lisbon club.

This shocking turn of events is a major setback for Benfica, whose players must now overcome the death of a well-liked team-mate while attempting to find the motivation to play for the rest of the season.

Porto recruit three

In domestic football, the two title contenders made the most of the winter transfer window, strengthening their squads for the months to come.

Champions and current table toppers FC Porto signed three players who they hope will allow the team to compete on three fronts: the Champions League, the Superliga and the Portuguese Cup. In came Brazilians Maciel from Uniao Leiria and Carlos Alberto from Fluminense, along with Portugal winger Sergio Conceicao, who signed on a free transfer after terminating his contract with Lazio in Italy. The new faces are expected to fortify the midfield and attack, areas that have become weakened recently by Deco's inconsistent form and Derlei's serious injury.

Championship rivals Sporting also went shopping, and found a bargain in Tinga, a Brazilian international who arrived for free from Gremio. He could form a strong midfield partnership with his compatriot Fabio Rochemback, who is already a hero for the fans in Alvalade after a series of impressive displays this season.

Rochemback's aggressive performances in central midfield were key to the club's recent eight-match winning streak, with striker Liedson doing his share of the work as well. The former Corinthians striker may have only arrived at the club after the season had kicked off, but he is already Sporting's top scorer with seven goals in 14 games.

'Police and firemen say they lack the resources to operate effectively at Euro 2004'

Identity crisis

TIM VICKERY in Santiago

Chilean football is struggling to emulate the success of the country's economy

CHILE IS SOUTH AMERICA'S sole economic success story, with levels of prosperity that leave the rest of the continent envious. But the benefits have not trickled down to football, as the country's hosting of the South American Under-23 Championship made clear.

The games were staged in five towns on the Pacific coast, on bumpy pitches in ramshackle stadiums that gave the impression a tourist armed with a bucket and spade could have made a better job of them. The story is no better in the capital, Santiago, the base of Colo Colo. Chile's leading club may command the support of some 70 per cent of the population, but, utterly broke, they spent the past two years in administration. Though the financial situation has improved, they could well be forced to sell their Monumental stadium.

Their main rivals, Universidad de Chile, are in similarly dire straits. Indeed, the academic institution that gave birth to the team is considering withdrawing the right to use its name. The club stage their games in the National stadium, an outdated hulk as inhospitable as when it housed thousands of political prisoners, with torture and hundreds of executions, following the coup by General Pinochet in 1973.

Much of the football is as poor as the stadiums. The domestic championship is now organised on a Mexican-style play-off basis, but the initiative has not proved popular. No format is capable of disguising the lack of quality on the field. "The game in Chile is so slow, anyone can play there," says 1998 World Cup left-back Francisco Rojas, now in Austria with Sturm Graz.

Although steps have been taken to counter a serious hooliganism problem, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Chilean football is operating a long way short of its potential. "Our football has not kept up with the development of our society," says Elias Figueroa, the immaculate 1970s centre-back who is Chile's greatest ever player.

"Normally football is a reflection of the state of the country, but that's still not happening in Chile. Our clubs are badly run. There

'Club presidents build up huge debts then just walk away'

Former Chilean international Elias Figueroa

No way through ...Chile's Pablo Contreras shields the ball from Argentina's Javier Saviola during the 2-2 World Cup qualifying draw in September

may be some corruption, but incompetence is much more important. There's no responsibility. Club presidents build up huge debts then just wash their hands and walk away. There's been a big fight to change things, and now in March a new law is set to come in that will enable the clubs to become limited companies."

Mediocre record

Without making more efficient use of its resources, it is hard to see Chilean football making much of an international impression. Colo Colo's 1991 triumph is the only time a Chilean club have won the Libertadores Cup. The national team have never won the Copa America and their World Cup record is mediocre. They have never won a World Cup match outside South America and, 1962 aside – when they finished third as hosts – the last of their three finals victories was against the United States in 1950.

"We don't have a football environment like Argentina," says Manuel Pellegrini, the Chilean coach who had some success across the Andes with San Lorenzo and River Plate. "Football is a way of life in Argentina. The youngster grows up surrounded by it, and gives his all in every game. The Chilean player doesn't feel the same obligation."

In South America, football is all about identity. Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Colombia have all developed their own distinct approach to the game which is accepted as an important reflection of the characteristics of the people. This is not the case in Chile. "We've tried to imitate Argentina," says Figueroa. "We've tried to imitate Brazil. We've tried to imitate Germany and Spain. There's been no continuity."

In Santiago's leading bookshop, books on the Pinochet years are not found in the Chilean history section. They are hidden, unmarked, on a different floor. Perhaps it is hard to construct a footballing identity in a country that has a problem facing up to its past. Or maybe seeing itself as South America's most European nation limits Chile's scope for creating distinct cultural expression.

Whatever the reason, national team coach Juvenal Olmos sees his country's lack of footballing identity as an advantage. "We're not so good that we can declare: 'This is our style, and we will play this way no matter where,'" he says. "I'm totally practical about this. We have to change our style in accordance with the opposition. The Chilean player is good tactically. If you tell him 'go out and play off the cuff', he can't do it. He does much better if you give him specific responsibilities. He can adapt to different requirements."

Change for the worse

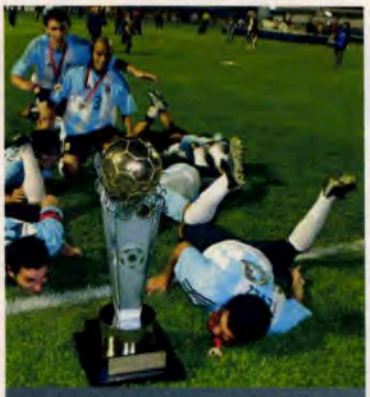
Nevertheless, constant switches in system and personnel can undermine the cohesion of a team – as certainly happened to Chile in the Under-23 Championship, which served as the Olympic qualifiers, as the defence grew more disorientated with every game.

Olmos gives the impression of being a gifted coach, capable of changing the panorama of a game, but who is carried away with his own intelligence. His proclamation of 'a new era' on his appointment a year ago ruffled feathers unnecessarily. As Chile's playmaker David Pizarro commented: "It's difficult to know what it means, but it comes across as if he's saying that everything that came before was bad, which strikes the old players as a lack of respect."

It could be that, at 41, Olmos lacks maturity for the post. That is certainly the conclusion that Chilean FA president Reinaldo Sanchez has reached. Olmos and Sanchez have fought almost non-stop for a year. Neither disguises his dislike for the other, and Sanchez admits that he is studying the legal basis for sacking Olmos without compensation.

In the last World Cup qualification campaign Chile went through three coaches and finished bottom of the table. They should be capable of far better, but with instability at the top and poor organisation all round, they are going about it the hard way.

Perhaps their most famous gift to football is the overhead kick, pioneered in Chile and still referred to in South America as a *chileno*. Now it seems that what Chilean football really needs is a kick up the backside.



Ground force...champions Argentina

● Chile won the bronze medal at the last Olympics. But their attempt to qualify for Athens 2004 via the South American Under-23 Championship came unstuck when they met Paraguay in a match they had counted on winning.

Brazil also came unstuck against the same opposition. Some of their players confessed after their shock 1-0 defeat that they had believed they were in for an easy afternoon.

But Paraguay rarely make it easy for anyone. The country's footballing successes include two Copa America wins, Olimpia's three Libertadores titles, respectable appearances in the last two World Cups, and the fact the national team top the table in the qualifying campaign for Germany 2006.

Paraguay made it to the 1992 Olympics with the advantage of hosting the qualifying tournament. Now, away from home, they were forced through a punishing schedule of eight games in 17 days – and got better with every match.

The Paraguayans qualified for Athens in second place behind Argentina, who claimed a first title for national coach Marcelo Bielsa after crucial victories over Brazil and Paraguay.

For Brazil, who had hoped to add the Olympic title to their recent World Cup, Under-17 and Under-20 triumphs, defeat was traumatic.

● *See Talent Scout, page 70.*

The ringer revolution

MARK GLEESON in Tunis

The 2004 Nations Cup featured a growing band of international mercenaries

RWANDA'S ELIMINATION FROM the African Nations Cup ended a fairytale run for a country that has just recently emerged from a horrible genocide that killed hundreds of thousands of people.

Rwanda had pulled off a major upset by reaching the finals for the first time, the tiny east African nation eliminating four-times winners Ghana in the qualifiers last July.

In Tunisia they strengthened their new-found reputation, amassing four points in a performance well beyond their wildest dreams. Those points came from a draw with Guinea and a win over giant neighbours the Democratic Republic of Congo, who have been a major political foe.

But it was an Angola-born player who emerged as an unlikely hero for Rwanda in yet another troubling incident of nationality swapping that is beginning to blight the African game.

Six months ago, Joao Elias Raphael had never been to Rwanda and had no connections with the country. He is now a national hero after scoring the country's first goal at the Nations Cup finals.

Elias was born in Luanda 30 years ago but is one of a growing band of mercenaries who have taken up an international career by accepting the offer of nationality from Rwanda.

Elias grew up in Angola, but never made a mark in the Girabola (Angola's First Division) and in 1990 left when his father, who is still in Luanda, sent him to Belgium, where some of his relatives lived, to escape the troubles and study.

In Belgium, Elias began his career in the Third Division but then made a breakthrough at top-flight Mechelen.

He was then suspended for a year by FIFA after failing to honour a contract in the United Arab Emirates before resuming his

'I wasn't going to turn down a chance to play in the Nations Cup'

Joao Elias

Soldier of fortune ...Angola-born Elias became a Rwandan hero

career back in the Belgian Third Division with Kortrijk.

Rwanda captain Desire Mbonabucya, who also plays in Belgium, approached him with the wacky offer of a chance to play in the Nations Cup.

After qualifying for the tournament, Rwanda actively sought out players to strengthen their side, some of legitimate Rwandan descent but also a few 'ringers' like Elias. Mbonabucya was charged with finding likely candidates in Belgium to help the cause.

Citizenship papers

Elias made his debut in October's World Cup qualifier against Namibia after his citizenship papers were arranged by Rwandan FA president Caesar Kayizari, a powerful figure in the government.

"It wasn't a difficult decision," said Elias, now also a Belgian citizen. "I'm 30 now and I wasn't going to turn down the opportunity to play international football and take part in the African Nations Cup."

He proved a major hit, particularly after scoring against Tunisia in the opening game of the finals with an exquisite free-kick from the edge of the penalty area.

Elias doesn't know any of the local Kinyarwanda language but after his goal the public in the Rwandan capital Kigali have taken him to their hearts, giving him the nickname 'Imana y Imana', God of God. They had to make do with two appearances from their new hero, however, after he was suspended for the third group game after picking up a yellow card in each of the first two encounters.

Elias said he had been contacted by the Angolan national side in 1996 but did not hear from them again. But he now has the chance to return home to play against the country of his birth, who will share the same group with Rwanda in the African qualifiers for the 2006 World Cup. "I want to show them that they were wrong to forget me," he said. "They never saw me play. Now, I want them to see what I can do."

Elias was one of nine members of the Rwanda squad at the Nations Cup finals who were born outside the country. Others include Said Abed Makasi, another lower league player in Belgium, who scored the winner against his home country DR Congo.

Another Congo-born player was goalkeeper Ramadhani Nkunzingoma, who admitted feeling unsure about playing against the country of his birth. "In my head I still feel Congolese," he said.

All change...Anther Yahia

● Former French youth international Anther Yahia made history on January 2 when he became the first player to benefit from a change in FIFA's rules on international eligibility, making his debut for Algeria in an Olympic qualifier.

The France-born Bastia defender, who represented that country at Under-18 level, scored the only goal in a 1-0 win over Ghana by Algeria's Under-23 side.

The new rule change, allowing players capped at junior level to represent another country, came into effect on January 1. Players will be allowed to switch if they have dual nationality and are under 21.

FIFA have waived the age limit rule until October. That allowed Yahia, 22 in March, to make the switch and join Algeria's African Nations Cup squad. Others, all former French youth and Under-21 internationals, were quick to follow suit, notably Tottenham striker Freddie Kanoute, who opted for Mali.

Flags of convenience

In addition to the players who have taken advantage of FIFA's rule change over international availability (see panel), the use of flags of convenience is now a growing trend in African football.

Hosts Tunisia, for example, fielded two Brazil-born players, one just recently granted citizenship. Francileudo dos Santos, who plays for French club Sochaux, is the new kingpin of the Tunisian attack after being granted nationality late last year to allow him to play in the tournament.

Born in Ze Doca in the north of Brazil, Santos played for Sampaio before moving to Standard Liege in Belgium. He then spent two seasons with Tunisian club Etoile Sahel before joining Sochaux four years ago.

Based on his two years of residency in Tunisia, Santos was given a Tunisian passport, allowing him to compete in the Nations Cup finals. He scored three goals in the first round of the tournament, plus one on his debut a week before it started.

Tunisia's other Brazilian is defender Jose Clayton, whose citizenship was fast-tracked in 1998 to allow him to play at the World Cup finals in France.

During the Nations Cup qualifiers, Togo used five Brazil-born players in several of their qualifying matches, drawing official protests from their opponents. However, the Confederation of African Football said it was unable to take any action because the players were given legitimate passports by the Togolese government. Despite the attempts to reinforce their side, Togo did not qualify for the finals.

In October, French coach Noel Tosi invited four of his old club players from Second Division Creteil – Frenchmen Eric Descombes, Pascal Gourville, Yohan Langlet and Franco-Portuguese Antonio Tavares Gomes – to turn out for his new employer, Mauritania.

Opponents Zimbabwe made no protest after beating the new-look Mauritanian side 4-2 on aggregate in the preliminary round of the 2006 World Cup qualifiers in November.

There was much criticism in Africa last year when Kenyan steeplechaser Stephen Cherono changed his name to Saif Saeed Shaheen and won a gold medal for Qatar at the world championships in that country, but the continent's football teams are now seemingly more than redressing the imbalance.

● *Read Mark Gleeson's full report from the 2004 African Nations Cup in next month's issue.*

Is Freddy ready?

The departure of more young players to Europe has put even more pressure on teenage star Adu

PAUL GARDNER in New York

IT WAS QUITE an occasion. The sight of US national coach Bruce Arena, normally imperturbable and unemotional, not quite managing to hold back his tears as he spoke at the retirement ceremony for DC United star Marco Etcheverry.

"He's done so much for me, for this team, for the game in this country," said Arena. "I don't think people will ever realise that until we look back years from now. We're not going to see a player like Marco Etcheverry in this League for many years to come."

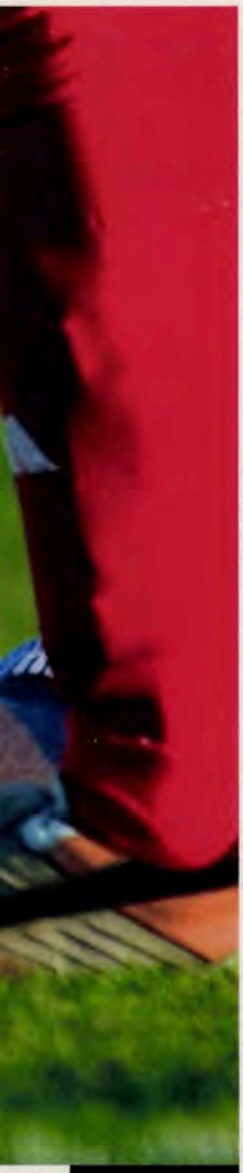
The Bolivia-born player, with DC United since Day One of MLS, led them to the championship in 1996, 1997 and 1999. The club, of course, have another star waiting in the wings in 14-year-old Ghana-born Freddy Adu but it remains to be seen how much playing time he will get in 2004. That depends on new coach Peter Nowak.

It is a curious situation. Adu has not yet played a single second in MLS, while Nowak has no coaching experience at all. Former coach Ray Hudson was fired at the end of the 2003 season after poor results and management dissatisfaction with his coaching methods.

The inexperienced Nowak is stepping into a high-pressure job. The presence of Adu means the coach will be perpetually in the spotlight. Two things might help Nowak, though. He, too, began his professional career as a teenager – a 16-year-old kid in Poland, and he, too, was an attacking player.

Incredibly, Adu, despite that big zero in the minutes-played column, is already the League's highest-paid player, with a salary of £210,000, plus over £140,000 in guaranteed bonuses.

Not, of course, a significant salary for European football, nor by



Waiting to pounce ...14-year-old Adu's playing time will depend on DC United's new coach, Peter Nowak

American standards in baseball and basketball. The low – to some, shockingly low – level of the MLS payment scale was revealed when a list of player salaries, circulated to members by the MLS Players Union, was published by the magazine *Soccer America*. The list included over 80 players earning less than £35,000 a year.

To general amazement, one of them was Los Angeles Galaxy forward Carlos Ruiz, who was the League's top scorer and Most Valuable Player in 2003. At the other end of the scale, there was the inexplicably high £165,000 paid to Darryl Powell – a mid-season import from Derby in England who played five undistinguished games for Colorado Rapids.

Along with Etcheverry, MLS lost another of its original players when Dallas Burn – in the midst of drastic rebuilding after a disastrous 2003 season – released midfielder Chad Deering.

Losing its veterans is one thing. But MLS now faces the growing possibility that it will not be able to hang on very long to its younger players. Success, of a not necessarily welcome variety, is coming to MLS. The soccer world – read rich European clubs – is beginning to notice that there are some pretty good American players in the League, and that they are available. And a look at the MLS salary scale suggests they are not going to be too expensive.

I'm in charge...Alexi Lalas

● Having retired as a player in 2000 at 30, Alexi Lalas had second thoughts after a year's absence. He returned in 2001 for three more years of action with Los Angeles Galaxy, a spell that climaxed with the MLS title in 2003. Lalas has retired, again – but this time he moves straight into the roles of president and general manager of current MLS champions San Jose Earthquakes. Totally lacking in experience, Lalas is nevertheless a true soccer personality with abundant enthusiasm. His new boss, AEG president Tim Leiweke, said: "He will be part of all aspects of the team."

American exports

Manchester United now have three Americans on their books: goalkeeper Tim Howard, plus youngsters Kenny Cooper and Jon Spector. "There is an untapped market in America," is Sir Alex Ferguson's view – but it is not going to remain untapped much longer.

During its close season (December to March), MLS has been leaking players as never before. Gone are Brian McBride and Carlos Bocanegra (both to Fulham), Zach Thornton (Benfica), Clint Mathis (Hannover 96), Brian West (Fredrikstad, Norway) and Antonio Martinez (Cordoba, Spain). There have also been serious attempts from English clubs to grab Bobby Convey, Landon Donovan and Ruiz. None of the latter deals worked out, but the players' departures cannot be long delayed.

Of course, this is a dilemma that Brazil and Argentina have been faced with for decades. With a difference: where the South Americans can rely on a steady stream of skilled youngsters coming up through the clubs as replacements, MLS is struggling to fill the gaps.

That reality was made clear at the 2004 Super Draft. Of the 60 players selected, only one, Adu, could be described as exceptional ...and he is 14! Most of the rest came from college. Experience has proved that such players are rarely ready for the pro game, and never likely to make an immediate impact.

A new complication for MLS was the imposition by FIFA of transfer windows. They mean that the League must now complete all incoming transfers by March 31, ruling out the possibility of bringing in out-of-contract foreigners during the MLS season, which begins on April 4.

Shake-up at Earthquakes

The traffic has not been all one way. There is a possibility that two young Americans currently in Europe – Jovan Kirovski (Birmingham City) and Cory Gibbs (St Pauli, Germany) – may return to play in MLS.

And then there is the return of that most faithful of veterans, Alexi Lalas (see panel). Lalas will be working at San Jose Earthquakes, where change is in the air. Coach Frank Yallop has departed to become Canada's national team boss; his replacement is his former assistant, Scotland-born Dominic Kinnear.

The club is run by billionaire Phil Anschutz's AEG group (which also runs five of the other nine MLS teams), but discussions have been proceeding for some time with Mexico's America club, who have expressed interest in either taking over or investing in Earthquakes. MLS commissioner Don Garber has expressed satisfaction with the discussions, though he said: "A deal has not yet been finalised, and it's premature to say when it will be. But it could be before the start of the season."

San Jose may also move grounds. The current facility, Spartan stadium, is intimate but old, and the pitch is too narrow. AEG has said it is exploring possibilities in the San Jose area – but that if it doesn't get financial help from the city, it will consider moving the team. The adjoining Santa Clara area is considered a likely site.

Another new, soccer-specific stadium is on the horizon – this one for Chicago Fire. The club – another AEG operation – have signed an agreement with Bridgeview – a suburban community 17 miles from downtown Chicago – to build a £45million, 20-25,000-seat facility, with a completion date of 2006.

Rochester Rhinos, the long-time success story of the second division A-League but playing in an unsuitable baseball stadium, have also put plans in motion for the building of a soccer-specific stadium in the town. Most of the costs, estimated at £15m, will be met by New York state funding.

Its construction, expected to take a year, will substantially increase the Rhinos' chances of entering MLS as an expansion club.

'Adu has not yet played a single second in MLS but is its highest-paid player'

Chasing the dream

Keir Radnedge finds Real Madrid's French star as ambitious as ever

ZINEDINE ZIDANE'S right to his controversial crown as FIFA's World Player of the Year will come under international scrutiny when Real Madrid face old rivals Bayern Munich in the knockout second round of the Champions League. It's a challenge he says he relishes.

WORLD SOCCER: Drawing Bayern was the worst possible outcome wasn't it?

ZINEDINE ZIDANE: You cannot say the worst. Possibly the most difficult or the most challenging. It will be close. We have played them before and each club has sometimes won, sometimes lost. But we cannot worry about Bayern. Our responsibility is to be on top of our game, and if we are, then that is the best we can do. An odd bounce of the ball, one mistake, a refereeing misjudgment – these are factors we can't control.

Does it worry you that Madrid have not been at their best in the early part of this year?

It's perfectly natural that the Christmas break throws you out of gear a little. But football seasons are full of ups and downs. In one way it's better to get poor form out of the way at this stage of the season than have problems in April and May. I don't think anyone should worry about us. Just be patient. Look how well we beat Valencia in the Spanish Cup [5-1 on aggregate].

How do you react to the criticism?

I think it is as exaggerated as the praise we receive when things go well. But that's football.

How did you feel about knocking out Olympique Marseille, your home-town club, in the group stage?

I had played against Marseille before, when I was with Bordeaux in the mid-1990s. But it wasn't such a big deal then. Just playing League football was thrilling enough. Maybe I wasn't grown up enough to understand the emotional significance.

But going back with Madrid was different?

Yes, of course. Before, I was just another young footballer. Now, I had a career behind me. I wasn't going back as anyone in an ordinary match. This was the Champions League and, also, there was the context. Marseille had to win to keep some hope of qualifying. I think there was a lot of fuss in the media about whether I was going back as a favourite son or a traitor!

'I will probably retire in two seasons' time'

Didn't your pre-match comments about scoring a goal add fuel to the fire?

Unfortunately, they did. It was just a joke, a light-hearted remark on the spur of the moment which got taken out of context and was blown up into a big deal. I said I was looking forward to scoring a goal, but then, I enjoy scoring goals, it's my job. I think the fans understood.

Have you always followed Marseille?

Yes, and I still always watch out for their results. I played my first football matches on waste ground across the road from the Velodrome. I still have friends there and go home when I can. My greatest hero is still the Uruguayan, Enzo Francescoli, who played for Marseille then. He was a great footballer and, years later, I found he was as much of a gentleman off the pitch as well. I used to admire him from afar. I never dared say hello or ask for autographs. It was a different world!

If you had to pick one key person from your early career, who would it be?

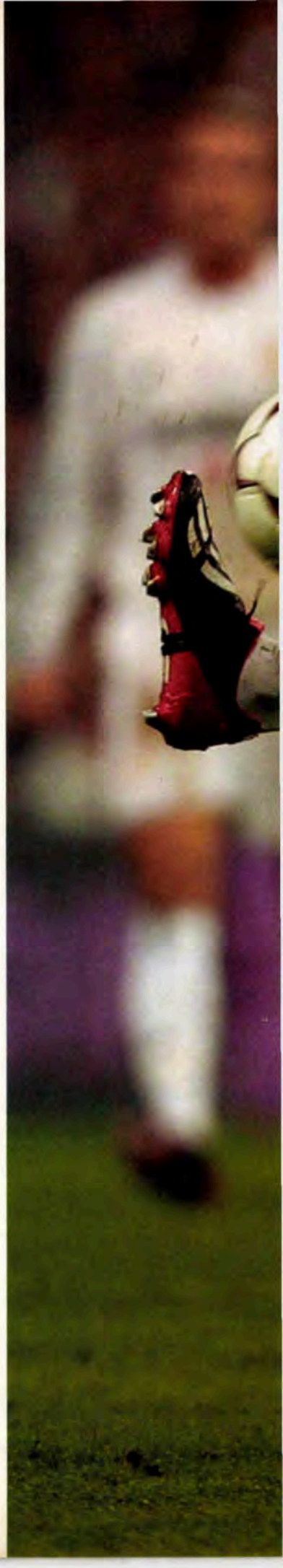
That's hard but I would say a man named Roberto Santanero. He was the coach of a youth team where I played called Septemes. He was like a second father for us all. He'd squeeze six or seven of us in his little open-topped car to take us to training. On a Sunday he'd watch us play two kids' games in the morning, then he'd watch the reserves and then the first team. The club didn't have any money so if we got hungry he gave us money for something out of his own pocket. He was devoted to the game, and we were devoted to him. It's people like that who inspire you.

Will you have one season with Marseille before you retire?

For one thing, I am not sure when I will retire. Obviously, it will be sooner rather than later, probably in two seasons' time when my Madrid contract expires. But I will see how I feel physically and mentally. I used to dream that one day I would play for OM, but it's hard to imagine now. Maybe, one day…in another life.

The Madrid sports press is suggesting you are football's fifth all-time great after Di Stefano, Pele, Maradona and Cruyff. What do you think?

They're mad. I hate these sort of comparisons. OK, if people want to go down that road I can't stop them. But everyone knows I don't like that sort of fuss.



Werder wonders...Johan Micoud is sandwiched by Valerien Ismael and Paul Stalteri after scoring in a 5-3 Bundesliga win over Wolfsburg in October

Halfway to heaven

Nick Bidwell profiles the autumn champions of the Bundesliga

PERFORMANCE-RELATED PAY has many advocates at Werder Bremen. A few months after the club announced that win bonuses would only be forthcoming if the team were in the top five in the Bundesliga, their suitably-motivated players took them into the winter break four points clear at the top. It was the first time they had been crowned 'autumn champions' for 13 years.

Last summer, there seemed little prospect of Werder being forced to supplement the players' pay packets. Money was so tight that the only new recruits were free transfers, their defensive organiser – Dutch libero Frank Verlaat – had left for Austria Wien, Brazilian striker Ailton was engaged in his customary war of words with the management after yet another tardy return from his holidays, and morale was further undermined by a 4-0 thrashing in the InterToto Cup by Austrians Pasching.

That result left Werder general manager, former Germany striker Klaus Allofs, in a blind fury. "This has to be one of the worst displays I've ever seen from us," he stormed. "We were arrogant. We obviously think we are better than we really are."

Fortunately, the humiliation in Pasching was not to prove the shape of things to come. On the opening day of the season, Werder beat Hertha 3-0 in Berlin and since then, the *Bremer* have rarely missed a beat, piling on the points and losing only twice before Christmas.

'The team's attacking play has been as vibrant as their controversial new bright green and orange strip'

The fact that no other team scored as many goals as Werder in the first half of the season (45) tells its own story. Whether mounting swift counter-attacks on their travels or dictating terms at home, the team's attacking play has been as vibrant as their new bright green and orange strip – a controversial change of ▶

Mr Tenacity...Schaaf

THE COACH

Thomas SCHAAF
Born 30.04.61. Tenacious and very disciplined, he played 262 League games at full-back for Werder between 1978 and 1995, winning the title in 1988 and 1993, and also the 1992 European Cup-winners Cup. As a coach, he led the Werder youth team for two years, then their amateur side for four. Appointed first-team boss after Felix Magath left in May 1999.

GOALKEEPERS

Pascal BOREL
26.09.78. Became first-choice keeper in August 2002 after Frank Rost left for Schalke. But did not always convince and dropped back to No 2 when Reinke arrived.

Andreas REINKE
10.01.69. After three years abroad with Greek side Iraklis and Murcia in Spain, the veteran joined Werder on a free last summer and quickly set about stabilising the defence. Won the Bundesliga in 1998 during his six-year spell at Kaiserslautern.

DEFENDERS

Frank BAUMANN
29.10.75. The Werder captain has been outstanding this term, successfully making the switch from central defence to a midfield holding role and becoming a Germany regular. First made his name at Nurnberg.

Valerien ISMAEL (Fra)
28.09.75. Competitive central defender who has been a hit since joining on loan from Strasbourg in the summer. Has spent the bulk of his career at Strasbourg (three spells) and Lens (two), but had an ill-fated stint with Crystal Palace in England in 1998.

Mladen KRSTAJIC (Ser)
13.09.79. Much-improved Serbian international centre-back who joined from Partizan Belgrade in summer 2000. A tough and uncompromising marker, his left-footed distribution is well above average and his power in the air makes him a threat at set-pieces. Will join Schalke this summer.

Ludovic MAGNIN (Swi)
20.04.79. Enterprising left-back or left-sided midfielder, but injuries and a loss of form have reduced his first-team chances this term.

Paul STALTERI (Can)
18.10.77. Industrious, adaptable Canadian international who has served Werder well since arriving from Toronto Lynx in 1997. Now the established left-back, but can fill a number of other roles, even up front.

Stabiliser...Reinke

UMIT Davala (Tur)
30.07.73. Used at right-back, but has played in every position except keeper during his career. Born in Germany to Turkish parents, he joined on loan from Inter last summer, and is now permanent.

MIDFIELDERS

Ivica BANOVIC (Cro)
02.08.80. Earmarked as the replacement for long-serving Austrian playmaker Andy Herzog when signed from NK Zagreb in 2000. But though the Croat has talent, he lacks consistency and has warmed the bench this season.

Tim BOROWSKI
02.05.80. Not a first-team regular this season but still a valuable squad man, equally at home as a defensive midfielder or in a more creative role. With Werder from the age of 16. Capped twice by Germany in 2002.

Valuable...Borowski

Fabian ERNST
30.05.79. Dubbed the 'new Beckenbauer' early in his career for his stylish play at libero, he surprisingly flopped after moving from Hannover to Hamburg in 1998. It was only when he joined Werder two years later and started to play in midfield that everything clicked into place. An all-rounder with the ability to create, score and tackle. One flaw – little pace.

Peka LAGERBLOM (Fin)
19.10.82. Finnish prospect bought from Lahti during the winter break.

Krisztian LISZTES (Hun)
02.07.76. This technically-gifted Hungarian schemer has shown a tendency to drift out of games. But this term, he has been much more centre-stage, complimenting the finesse with more activity and grit. Joined from Stuttgart in 2001.

Johan MICOUD (Fra)
24.07.73. After two barren years in Serie A with Parma, the French international playmaker moved to Werder on a free in August 2002, quickly becoming a favourite thanks to his close control and incisive passing. Previously with Cannes and Bordeaux. Won the last of his 16 caps at the 2002 World Cup and says he has given up hope of being picked again.

Christian SCHULZ
01.04.83. A skilful and diligent central midfielder, he was given an extended first-team run towards the end of last season, but has failed to build on it.

Holger WEHLAGE
03.07.76. Industrious reserve who prefers a right-flank role.

FORWARDS

AILTON (Bra)
19.07.73. Bought from Mexico's Tigres UNL, the barrel-chested Brazilian did little in his first season at Werder (1998-99), but has certainly made up for it since, exploiting his speed and explosive left-footed shooting to notch 76 Bundesliga goals up to the 2003-04 winter break. Notorious for his eccentricity and indiscipline, he has decided to join Schalke on a free next July.

Markus DAUN
10.09.80. In his second season on loan from Leverkusen, the dynamic youngster has experienced both highs and lows – a regular first-team spot and rave reviews last term; injury after injury this. Leverkusen want him back.

Angelos HARISTEAS (Gre)
09.02.80. One of the great hopes of Greek football, the talented striker became Werder's most expensive purchase when they paid Aris Salonika £2.3million for him in July 2002. Impressed last season but the emergence of Klasnic this term has meant him spending more time on the bench.

Ivan KLASNIC (Cro)
29.01.80. Perhaps the most improved player at Werder, his speed, directness and composed finishing have rendered him hot property. Werder hope to extend his contract, which runs out in June, but Leverkusen and Hamburg have other ideas. Born in Hamburg to Croat parents, his first club was St Pauli.

Aerial prowess...Valdez

Nelson VALDEZ (Par)
28.11.83. Exuberant young Paraguayan who despite not being particularly tall, leaps brilliantly for headers. Has looked the part when coming off the bench this season.

Crowd favourite...Micoud

kit following years of white shirts and green shorts.

At the heart of Werder's success is the way their creative midfielders dovetail. Hungarian international Krisztian Lisztes has at last added consistency to his undoubted ball-playing ability; the clever movement and distribution of Fabian Ernst has been a revelation; and French playmaker Johan Micoud has constantly impressed, showing the sort of vision and

On the ball...but Brazilian striker Ailton is set to move to Schalke

producing the killer final balls that took Bordeaux to the French title in 1998-99.

Now 30, Micoud has made nonsense of Parma's decision to allow him to leave for Werder on a free transfer two years ago. Micoud may occasionally be a little too forthright when commenting on team-mates and coaching staff, but on the whole Allofs is right to describe him as "the one player in our team we absolutely cannot do without". Pity France coach Jacques Santini does not agree.

The chief beneficiary of Micoud's approach work is maverick Ailton, who topped the Bundesliga scoring chart at the mid-point of the season with 16.

'I haven't seen a team better than us this season. Even Bayern don't have our class. We are playing with so much belief and everyone wants the ball'

Midfielder Fabian Ernst

A worthy successor to Rudi Voller and Karl-Heinz Riedle – outstanding Werder strikers of yesterday – Ailton has a well-deserved reputation for unpredictability, for applying himself only when the mood takes him. Yet on the evidence of the past few months, he may have seen the error of his ways. His workrate is considerably higher and, in a conversion of biblical proportions, he has even turned to creating chances for others.

More of the same will be required from Ailton if Werder are to maintain their championship challenge. But the snag is he is due to join Schalke in the summer and the temptation could be for him to ease up at the business end of the season.

Defensively, Werder have improved considerably on last term, when they leaked soft goals with reckless abandon. The experienced ex-Kaiserslautern keeper Andreas Reinke, a free transfer from Spanish club Murcia, has performed far more ably than his erratic young predecessor, Pascal Borel. Meanwhile, Serb Mladen Krstajic – who like Ailton is Schalke-bound – has developed into a fine centre-back, forming an excellent barrier with talented Frenchman Valerien Ismael, who came in on loan last summer from Strasbourg.

Allofs expects

Not surprisingly, both players and management are now willing to raise their sights. After depicting Werder as "a team with an outside chance of the title", Allofs now dubs his side as "real favourites". Ernst, who many believe will be in Germany's starting XI at Euro 2004, is happy to follow suit, saying: "So far this season, I haven't seen a team better than us. Bayern, for example, haven't the same class. We are playing with so much belief. Everyone wants the ball, everyone is aware of their strengths. No one hides.

"We're attacking with more intelligence and at the back we're now very solid. All our new signings [Reinke, Ismael and Turkish right-back Umit Davala] have brought their experience and winning mentality.

"Obviously, the pressure will be on us as League leaders. We will be there to be shot at. But we have lived with it most of the season and there's no reason we can't continue in the same vein till May."

It does make a change for Werder to openly speak of their lofty aspirations. When legendary coach Otto Rehhagel was leading them to the 1992 European Cup-winners Cup and Bundesliga titles in 1988 and 1993, understatement was the order of the day. Predictions of glory were kept to a minimum and Rehhagel cannily portrayed his team as provincial interlopers.

Werder score highly because of their steadfast belief in continuity of leadership. Rehhagel was at the helm for 14 years (1981-95), while incumbent Thomas Schaaf is now in his fifth season and is destined for more, having just signed a new contract to take him through to 2006.

In contrast to the coaches who have tried and failed to bring success to the club in the late 1990s – among them present Stuttgart boss Felix Magath, Dutchman Aad De Mos and ex-East Germany skipper 'Dixie' Dorner – Schaaf is 100 per cent Werder. For 17 seasons, he was a trusted full-back in Rehhagel's side, and subsequently coached the youth and amateur teams before being appointed to take over from Magath in May 1999.

Although not the most charismatic of coaches, the 42-year-old has done a fine job. Imposing his authority on a team that includes a number of headstrong individuals is no mean feat, and it says much for his man-management abilities that Werder are such a tight-knit group.

Rarely has Schaaf put a foot wrong this season. The switch from 3-5-2 to 4-4-2 has worked wonders for the team's balance and cohesiveness; captain Frank Baumann has looked the part since being switched from central defence to a midfield holding role; the decision to play Croat Ivan Klasnic in attack rather than Greece striker Angelos Haristeas has been totally vindicated.

Not that Schaaf is without his concerns. In both 2001-02 and last term, Werder were in a Champions League qualifying spot at the winter break, only to fall apart in the spring. The coach will be keen to avoid a hat-trick of missed opportunities.

Werder must also do better against the Bundesliga's heavyweights. A 2-1 defeat in Dortmund, a 3-1 home loss to Stuttgart and a 1-1 home draw with Bayern hardly point to an all-conquering team. Even when winning 3-1 at Leverkusen they needed a dubious penalty to help them prevail.

A longer-term concern is that Ailton and Krstajic will not be the only star names leaving in the summer. The contracts of Lisztes and Klasnic are up in June, and they could well depart on Bosman frees; Lisztes to Italy, Klasnic to Leverkusen or Hamburg.

Werder, though, are working on their own purchases. Bochum centre-back Frank Fahrenhorst will join next season and there is talk that Kaiserslautern and Germany striker Miroslav Klose may arrive too.

"We all want to return to the good times of the Rehhagel era," says Allofs. "To do that we must look to improve the team year after year, and that holds true even if we are champions."

Follow Germany's lead

A winter break is inevitable in England, says Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger

IT IS INEVITABLE THAT we are heading towards a winter break for English football, but the key is the timing. A lot of Premiership managers are in favour of this move and it would be a great step forward for the game in this country. But the priority has to be keeping the Christmas schedule.

We cannot consider having the break at the end of December because that period provides the greatest promotion the Premiership could wish for. We have to remember what makes the English football season special and different to other nations.

Christmas football is part of the tradition in this country. No one is at work, they are sitting around bored, and going to watch their team playing with their families is the highlight for many people. There is always a special atmosphere in the stadiums over the festive season and it puts the Premiership on a different level of public awareness compared to every other league in the world.

Over the Christmas period, I called a friend in Brazil, another in Spain, also friends in Italy and Portugal. They had all seen Arsenal's game against Southampton live and enjoyed watching it because there is no other football available at that time of the year. I read the French newspapers over Christmas and they were dedicating two or three pages every day to the Premiership. The domestic game is dead in France for a couple of weeks, so English action becomes the focus of all attention. The benefits of that should not be underestimated.

Also, clubs make so much money at that time. The stadiums are full, as they often are in any case, but in terms of merchandising, it is the most successful time of the year.

We need to introduce a winter break as soon as possible and it needs to come in January. My view is that this will be resolved in 2004 and we should have this in English football by the start of next season. I think this will be one of the big political issues for the club game in this country over the next 12 months, but it has to happen.

Sven Goran Eriksson is determined to bring this in, and I can understand why. This rest period would ultimately help the England team in the major tournaments that always take place at the end of long, hard seasons, when players have not had suitable breaks to recharge their energies.

The England team should be looking to win major championships. They should not be satisfied with just qualifying and doing quite well when they get there. They have done it in rugby, where England are now world champions, so why not look to do it in football, the game they brought to the world?

Making a case...Wenger

Interview by Kevin Palmer

Germans head for sun

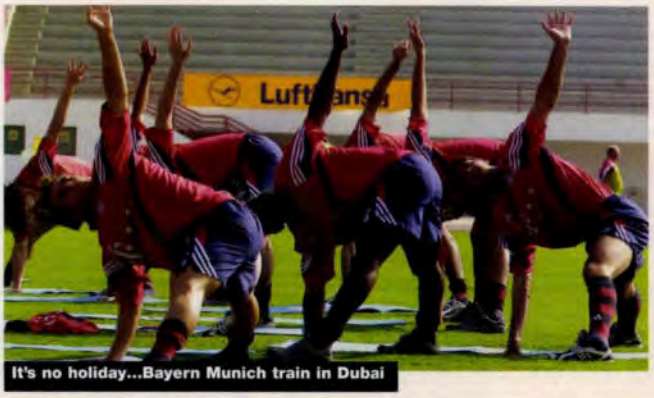
Werder were one of five Bundesliga teams to visit Turkey in the January break

A TOUCH OF THE SUN is the priority for Bundesliga teams looking for winter break training camps. Early this year, 16 of the 18 top-flight clubs flew to the warmer climes of Spain, Portugal, Turkey and the Gulf.

Champions Bayern Munich plumped for luxury in Dubai. However, the most popular destination was the Turkish resort of Belek, where Werder Bremen, Hannover, Kaiserslautern, 1860 Munich and Bochum all checked in.

The two exceptions to the getaway rule were Schalke and Hansa Rostock. Schalke were initially bound for Turkey, too, but scrapped plans following terrorist attacks in Istanbul in November. Instead, coach Jupp Heynckes opted for an intensive three sessions per day in their home town of Gelsenkirchen, while Rostock coach Juri Schlunz said: "Those clubs who travel abroad lose two days' training. We have good enough facilities on our doorstep."

Nick Bidwell



It's no holiday...Bayern Munich train in Dubai

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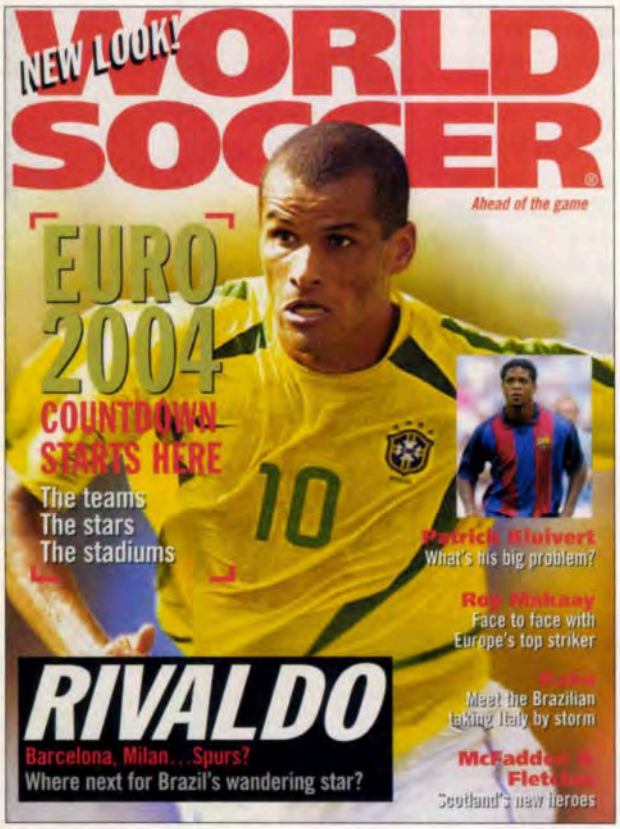

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Finals-bound...Andre Ooijer (left) puts Holland 2-0 ahead in their second leg rout of Scotland in the qualifying play-off

Advocaat for change?

The national coach must bring in new blood, argues Klaas-Jan Droppert

THERE IS NEVER a dull moment when it comes to Holland and qualifying for a major tournament. The Euro 2004 campaign was no exception, and seldom can a team have come in for so much criticism after putting together a 17-match, two-year unbeaten run and going on to lose only one of their eight group matches.

When Dick Advocaat took over as national team coach after Louis Van Gaal's failure to lead Holland to the 2002 World Cup he decided not to make major changes. He kept faith with the key players who had been serving the national team since Euro 96, speculating that their sense of honour would be enough to spark an upturn in fortunes. The coach also indicated that changes were impossible since the next generation wasn't ready to take over.

Advocaat's policy appeared correct after Holland made a flying start to the European Championship qualifiers, defeating Belarus 3-0 at home and Austria by the same scoreline in Vienna. As a result, confidence was sky high when Holland met main group rivals the Czech Republic at home in March 2003 in their third qualifying game. It should have been a night of celebration, with Frank De Boer becoming the first Dutch player to win 100 caps. However, after the Dutch took the lead through Ruud Van Nistelrooy, De Boer allowed Milan Baros to cross and give Jan Koller an opportunity he couldn't miss.

The game finished 1-1, opinion turned against the team overnight, and the qualifying campaign went from bad to worse. The Dutch followed up the Czech game by performing poorly and gaining only narrow wins away to minnows Moldova and Belarus. These games caused growing dissatisfaction among fans and media, with the players being described as spoilt and overpaid actors who didn't seem interested in playing at Euro 2004. There was a plea for youngsters like Rafael Van der Vaart to be brought into the side, while a national poll showed that the public wanted to get

Place kept...Ruud Van Nistelrooy

Controlling role...Edgar Davids

rid of De Boer, Clarence Seedorf, Edgar Davids and Holland's all-time top scorer, Patrick Kluivert.

However, Advocaat largely ignored the views of the people, only omitting Seedorf, and expressed some annoyance that a hostile atmosphere had been created despite the fact that automatic qualification was still within reach.

Outplayed by Czechs

That prospect disappeared, though, when Holland travelled to Prague last September. Davids was sent off after just 15 minutes, the team were outplayed and the Czech Republic won 3-1 to secure top place in the group.

But even then nothing changed, with Advocaat remaining loyal to his failing players. Most strikingly, the coach chose to field the Van Nistelrooy-Kluivert strike partnership – which had proved ineffective nearly every time it had been used – in the first leg of the qualifying play-off away to Scotland. The 1-0 defeat came as no big surprise.

On the stroke of 12, Advocaat finally saw the light and took the drastic measures that had been called for much earlier. Van Nistelrooy was picked instead of Kluivert in the second leg against the Scots, and De Boer was left on the bench. In came Van der Vaart and his Ajax team-mate Wesley Sneijder, who would turn out to be the hero of the day. The 20-year-old scored the opening goal in the 6-0 demolition in Amsterdam and was involved in four of the other goals. Three of them were scored by Van Nistelrooy.

If Holland's narrow escape has made one thing clear it is that the national team needs young blood. Some of the stalwarts are over the hill, and young guns like Van der Vaart, Sneijder, Arjen Robben and John Heitinga should get a chance.

But while many pundits think Holland should forget about trying to win Euro 2004 and use the tournament instead to build a team for the next World Cup, Advocaat lives only by the day. He will not leave players like De Boer, Davids and Kluivert at home, so only a handful of youngsters will go to Portugal.

Advocaat is extremely loyal. For instance, at the 1994 World Cup in the United States, during his previous spell in charge of Holland, he stuck by his protege Jan Wouters despite the fact the latter was in the autumn of his career and clearly suffering from the heat. In the quarter-final against Brazil, Wouters was handed the task of marking speedy forward Bebeto. It cost Holland dearly. The Brazilian turned out to be the man of the match, and Holland were eliminated.

Young gun...Rafael Van der Vaart

With that sense of loyalty in mind, don't be surprised if Advocaat decides to give the Van Nistelrooy-Kluivert tandem another chance. According to the coach, two of Europe's best strikers can be a deadly combination, an attitude that consigns Roy Makaay – Europe's top scorer last season – to the bench.

In Portugal, Holland will probably play 4-4-2, employing deep-lying wingers. Van der Meyde has little competition for the right-wing berth, with Marc Overmars preferred on the left. However, Advocaat isn't convinced of the latter's fitness, and PSV's Robben could take over.

Van der Vaart or Sneijder will take an attacking midfield role, with Davids as the controlling, defensive midfielder.

Defensive concerns

Probably the biggest worry will be the defence. Apart from Jaap Stam, Holland have no true world-class defenders. De Boer's replacement, Philip Cocu, Michael Reiziger, Giovanni Van Bronckhorst, Boudewijn Zenden and Wilfred Bouma all used to be midfielders or attackers. Advocaat has set his hopes on Andre Ooijer and Heitinga, an Ajax centre-back recently recovered after a long struggle with injuries. The left-back slot is the biggest problem, since Van Bronckhorst and Zenden are not international class. Bouma has the best claim to fill the gap.

Against Scotland in Amsterdam Holland showed they are still capable of playing marvellous football. But the old boys face more and more difficulties in their attempts to produce a good performance in every match.

Whether Holland will be strong candidates to become European champions depends on the coach's team selection. Will he remain loyal to players who have done so much for Dutch football, or will he pick the best team? It's up to Advocaat.

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Edwin VAN DER SAR	Fulham (Eng)	29.10.70	78	0
Ronald WATERREUS	PSV Eindhoven	25.08.70	6	0
Sander WESTERVELD	Real Sociedad (Spa)	23.10.74	6	0
DEFENDERS				
Pascal BOSSCHAART	Utrecht	28.02.80	0	0
Wilfred BOUMA	PSV Eindhoven	15.06.78	7	0
Frank DE BOER	Galatasaray (Tur)	15.05.70	108	13
John HEITINGA	Ajax	15.11.83	0	0
Mario MELCHIOT	Chelsea (Eng)	04.11.76	10	0
Andre OOIJER	PSV Eindhoven	11.07.74	13	1
Michael REIZIGER	Barcelona (Spa)	03.05.73	65	1
Jaap STAM	Lazio (Ita)	17.07.72	57	3
Giovanni VAN BRONCKHORST	Barcelona (Spa)	05.02.75	32	3
Boudewijn ZENDEN	Middlesbrough (Eng)	15.08.76	47	6
MIDFIELDERS				
George BOATENG	Middlesbrough (Eng)	09.05.75	2	0
Paul BOSVELT	Manchester City (Eng)	26.03.70	19	0
Philip COCU	Barcelona (Spa)	29.10.70	74	7
Edgar DAVIDS	Barcelona (Spa)	13.03.73	59	6
Marc OVERMARS	Barcelona (Spa)	29.03.73	80	16
Arjen ROBBEN	PSV Eindhoven	23.01.84	3	1
Clarence SEEDORF	Milan (Ita)	01.04.76	68	11
Wesley SNEIJDER	Ajax	09.06.84	3	2
Mark VAN BOMMEL	PSV Eindhoven	22.04.77	22	5
Andy VAN DER MEYDE	Internazionale (Ita)	30.09.79	8	1
Rafael VAN DER VAART	Ajax	11.02.83	13	3
Robin VAN PERSIE	Feyenoord	06.08.83	0	0
FORWARDS				
Jimmy Floyd HASSELBAINK	Chelsea (Eng)	27.03.72	23	9
Patrick KLUIVERT	Barcelona (Spa)	01.07.76	75	40
Roy MAKAAY	Bayern Munich (Ger)	09.03.75	26	3
Pierre VAN HOOIJDONK	Fenerbahce (Tur)	29.11.69	34	11
Ruud VAN NISTELROOY	Manchester United (Eng)	01.07.76	29	14

Caps and goals up to and including Holland v Scotland (19.11.03)

PAULETA

Cyclone of the Azores set to put in storming showing for the finals hosts

PORTUGAL'S 8-0 DRUBBING of Kuwait last November was a match of huge significance for striker Pauleta, who despite being substituted after an hour, still found the time to score four goals. That spree elevated him to third place in the country's all-time scoring list, with 27 in 53 appearances, and made him only the third Portuguese player to score four in an international.

Pauleta's importance to the team cannot be overestimated. After all, none of the squad's other attackers – Nuno Gomes, Simao and Helder Postiga – has his potential for goals.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward is the first choice as lone front-runner in national coach Luiz Felipe Scolari's favourite 4-2-3-1 formation, or would be alongside a strike partner in the 4-2-2-2 system that 'Big Phil' is reported to be toying with.

But whatever the formation, Pauleta – known as the 'Cyclone of the Azores', his birthplace – has every incentive to make a splash at Euro 2004. He spent most of the last European Championship finals on the bench and blew hot and cold during Portugal's humiliating World Cup 2002 campaign – his excellent hat-trick against Poland was sandwiched between anonymous displays in the defeats by the United States and South Korea. This time, he must deliver.

"Every player in the Portuguese side knows what's at stake at Euro 2004," says Pauleta. "This is a vital project for all of us. We have the honour of staging the event and we know we must live up to the expectations of our fans.

"We have many excellent players who are used to performing at the highest level and the spirit in our camp is upbeat.

"The draw gives us hope. Our aim is to win our opening two games, against Greece and Russia, and then go into the Spain match without any pressure."

To achieve those results, Portugal will be banking on Pauleta showing the sort of explosive finishing that has characterised his three-and-a-half seasons in the French League. In three marvellous years at Bordeaux, he amassed 64 League goals; since moving to PSG in an £8.6million deal last July, he is now breathing fire again after a sluggish start.

"Pauleta is a killer," says Manchester City centre-back David Sommeil, who played with him at Bordeaux. "He's very skilful with both feet and always on the look out for chances. He's not one to use his elbows but he knows how to place himself in front of defenders. He gets under their feet and waits for them to make a mistake. He's an incredible predator. His only weakness is his heading."

Off the pitch, the formerly shy and retiring forward has developed into one of Portugal's leaders, notably speaking out against the jeers of Portuguese fans during the 1-1 friendly draw with Greece in Aveiro last November. "The time has come for the country to unite around the national team," he insisted. "Criticism helps you learn, but there are limits. It's unacceptable when 30,000 fans start whistling their side after just five minutes. If we are all united, we can achieve our aims."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
Country Portugal
Born April 28, 1973, in Punta de Algada, Azores
Previous clubs Uniao Micaelense, Estoril, Salamanca (Spa), Deportivo La Coruna (Spa), Bordeaux (Fra)
International debut August 1997, v Armenia
International caps 53 (27 goals)
Honours Spanish League 2000 (Deportivo); French League Cup 2002 (Bordeaux)

Alessandro NESTA

Master and commander of Italy's defence in the Maldini mould

AS ITALY PREPARE for Euro 2004, coach Giovanni Trapattoni must come to terms with one of the great ironies of the modern Italian game. Namely that Italy, whose best teams traditionally build on their defensive strengths, currently find themselves with an abundance of riches in attack – Vieri, Del Piero, Totti et al – but a relative dearth of material at the back.

In the wake of Paolo Maldini's international retirement after the 2002 World Cup, Trapattoni has arguably only two genuine world-class central defenders – Milan's Alessandro Nesta and Internazionale's Fabio Cannavaro.

Recent history tells us that without the pair, Italy are in trouble. When both were ruled out of that dramatic World Cup second round game against South Korea, Italian defensive shortcomings were all too painfully obvious. Should anything befall them at Euro 2004, their likely back-ups – Juventus's Nicola Legrottaglie and Parma's Matteo Ferrari – are both talented players but lack experience.

While Cannavaro's skill and experience are beyond doubt, most commentators agree that Nesta, 27, is the natural successor to Maldini.

True, Maldini's greatest years were played out at left-back while Nesta has always been a central defender. But what links them is an apparently effortless command of the basics of defensive play – reading the game, timing, an ability to play their way out of defence, pace and an instinctive element of native arrogance.

Nesta belongs to the same school of great central defenders as Bobby Moore, Franz Beckenbauer, Ruud Krol and Daniel Passarella. For club and country, he mixes the tough with the creative, the ability to stop the opposition with the flair to initiate an attack.

Nesta has looked the part on the highest stage ever since his mobile phone rang one mid-November afternoon in 1995 summoning him back from a weekend break on the island of Elba (he was already on the ferry) to join Italy's Under-21 squad. A member of the side that won the European Under-21 title in 1996, he was subsequently drafted into Italy's squad for the European Championship finals the same year. Although he did not play in England, Nesta earned his first senior cap three months later in a 3-1 World Cup qualifying win against Moldova. Now, more than 50 caps later, he is an automatic first choice for Italy.

His form suffered a temporary lull in the aftermath of his £21.5 million transfer from Lazio to Milan in August 2002. But he soon became a key figure at the club, inspiring them to win the Champions League last season.

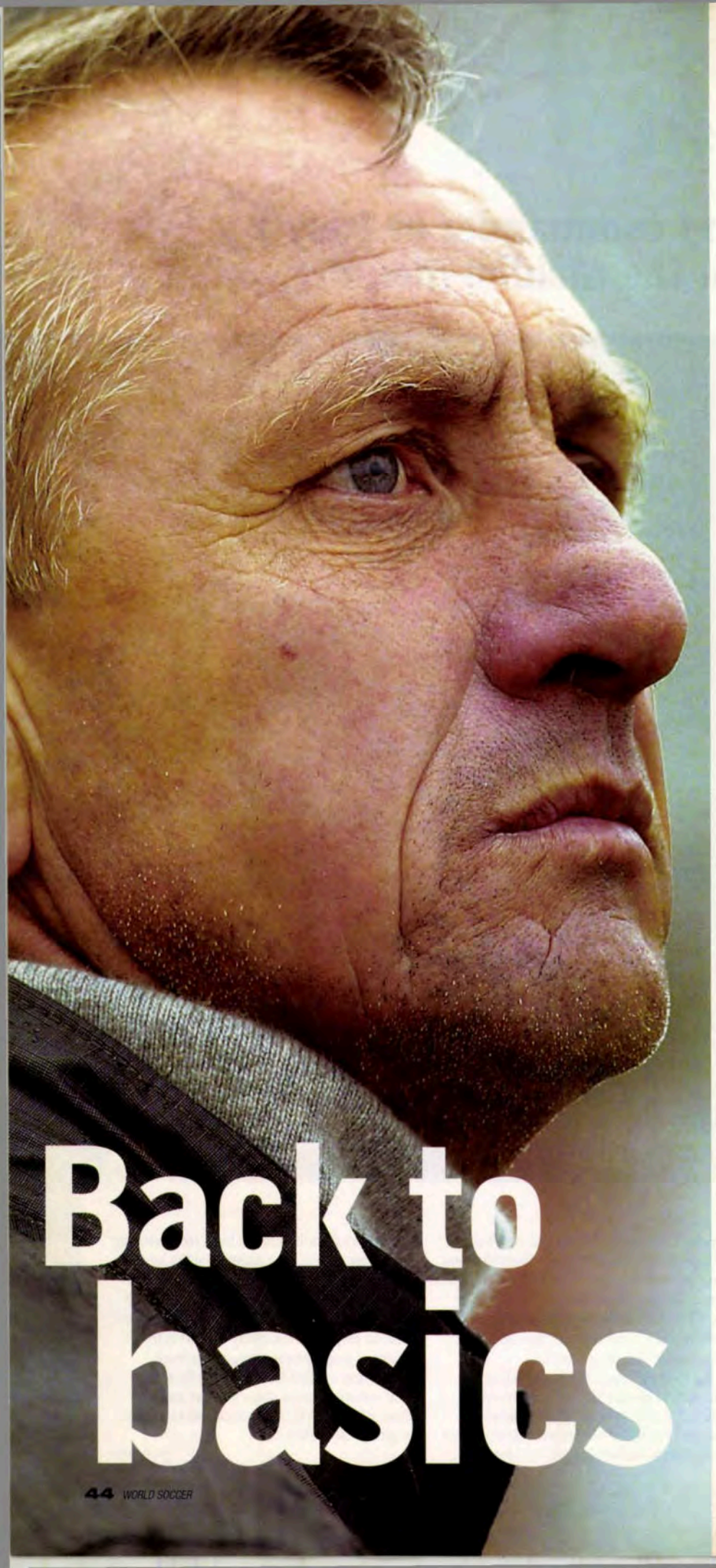
Nesta's contribution has been recognised by his fellow players, who named him the best defender in Serie A in a poll in January. But he is not impressed by talk of him being 'key'. He says: "I'm not a key player for the good reason that no player is. What really matters is the team, no single player matters that much."

He may be right but it can still be argued that some individual players matter more than others, and in that context, Nesta matters a great deal to Italy.

Paddy Agnew

FACT FILE

Club Milan
Country Italy
Born March 19, 1976, in Rome
Previous club Lazio
International debut October 1996, v Moldova
International caps 56 (0 goals)
Honours European Under-21 Championship 1996; European Cup-winners Cup 1999 (Lazio); European Supercup 1999 (Lazio); Champions League 2003 (Milan); Italian League 2000 (Lazio); Italian Cup 1998, 2000 (Lazio), 2003 (Milan)



Back to basics

UEFA 1954 50 years 2004

In the second of a special series to mark UEFA's golden jubilee, Johan Cruyff finds plenty to worry about in today's football compared with the past, and wants to see more ex-players involved in the game's future

HAS MUCH CHANGED in international football since you quit as a coach in 1996?
JOHAN CRUYFF: Of course – the clock hasn't stopped ticking. But it's still disappointing to see how football, the world's No 1 sport, is not No 1 when it comes to development. What I notice particularly is that policy-makers in football are never really concerned about individuals; all they're interested in is the team as a whole. Yet a team consists of 11 individuals, who each need attention.

I often wonder if we're making the most of the qualities that players have to offer. Today, they are in better physical shape, but their technical and ball skills have not grown at the same pace.

It also seems that a wealth of practical football knowledge is being squandered. If you want to be admitted to a coaching course, you need a good basic level of education; but many footballers lack that because they turn professional at 16, and then after a long career it's really hard to start studying again. But on the other hand these players already know everything there is to know about football. Too many are lost to the development of the game.

So what would you do about it?
A football career should become much more important as a criterion for being admitted to a coaching course. Some former top players do take these courses, because they want to coach professional teams. But they shouldn't be bothering with books on medical subjects – after all, the coaches of Ajax, Barcelona or Arsenal all have their own professional medical staff.

These coaching courses still are much too theoretical, and this is what you see reflected in the basic technical skills of the average player. In fact, I even see things deteriorating. We really need to pay attention to the basic skills: passing, trapping a ball, heading, kicking. If we don't, it won't be long before no one will want to watch football any more.

Is this why top-class football as a spectacle often fails to interest people?
Exactly. I watch all football, but I rarely find it interesting. I see far too much pinball-machine football. Only a very few players can dominate the ball – mostly, it's the ball dominating the player.

Which players do you still enjoy watching?
Well, the likes of Zidane and Raul, but here we're talking about players with a natural gift, something that their coaches have hardly had to contribute to. I'm especially worried about the

players who are created, those who develop during training. It's these who have mediocre basic skills.

Where do you feel they play the least attractive football?

Italy, probably, if I look at it from a spectator's point of view – but I don't think we should, because that would be judging Italian football from an arrogant perspective. The Italians are different from the Dutch, character-wise. We want to win and that has to be done playing attractive football. We're almost embarrassed to win through counter-football; to the Italians there's only one thing that matters, and that's winning, whatever it takes.

Do you still enjoy English football?

In England they seem to be a little confused, because now they have more foreign stars than English ones. The romance of English football is fantastic: straightforward passing football, they tackle like men – and whatever you do, don't whine! That has always produced an excellent atmosphere. But English football has lost its identity under the influence of other cultures. In fact, I can see the level of several countries' national teams deteriorating. This is a real problem, because – especially in a united Europe – the role of the national team is to represent national pride.

UEFA and FIFA ought to agree with the clubs that they must have six players in their teams who are eligible for selection for the country of that club. That way you protect the national football product, and guarantee opportunities for the young players.

Coaches complain you can't have wingers any more in top football.

I don't get that at all. There's no need to play with three strikers or two regular wingers. You can also play with one striker and a winger. There are many variations you could employ.

I like to play attacking football. You can do that best by using four backs and four midfielders, in a diamond shape. You can then make the fourth midfield player a striker. On the wings you put players who have the ability to cut inside. You could field a winger who can get past his marker and whip in a good cross, but you need to combine that with a striker who's good in the air.

Do you feel the Dutch national team has outstanding material to work with?

Our players are definitely not poor, that is not the problem. It would be much better if Holland were simply to change the way they play. I'm talking about the wingers maintaining their position on the wings; I feel we lack presence in midfield as a result. One of the main problems in Dutch football is the build-up from the back: we talk a lot about the build-up, but nine times out of 10 you get a route one ball up the pitch. And midfielders aren't willing to work for each other, which makes you vulnerable. It's all about basics.

Doesn't it surprise you that the number of spectators and the TV ratings remain high?

It does, in a way, because you get to see a lot of boring, poor matches. But it also simply goes to show the strength of football. You want to hold on to these people, and you also need young fans for continuity. We have an ageing population of supporters, which is a dangerous phenomenon.

How responsible are coaches for the way top European football is going?

They're responsible for the teams we watch every day, but they're not responsible for the training of the youths. That is the clubs' responsibility. I believe top division clubs should have a scheme in place for the education of their youth players, with coaches who have played top football themselves.

What about a club like Real Madrid, who could buy up a whole team?

That's not the problem. Obviously, killing the transfer system was a capital error. Now some players can walk away free of any transfer fee, and the club are left with the problem of replacing them. It takes money out of football because it all ends up in the players' bank accounts.

How do you solve that?

You don't. Some clubs do long-term deals with players, but performance will always suffer as a result. A new transfer system should be introduced, combining the good elements of the old days and the better parts of today's regulations.

Do you feel that some minor changes should be made to the Laws of the Game?

I'm not too keen on fiddling with the rules, and you certainly don't need to if the referee does his job. Maybe a camera on the goal-line makes sense, but any more and referees will be bombarded with TV footage. The game gives people a whole week of things to talk about at work, at lunch and at the pub. The last thing we want to do is to stop people doing that; it's part of the tradition of football.

● *Johan Cruyff was talking exclusively with Johan Derksen of the Dutch magazine* Voetbal International, *a member of the ESM group (European Sports Magazines)*

'Too many experienced pros are lost to the game's development'

Life at the top...(clockwise from right) Cruyff as a Barcelona player; celebrating the 1992 European Cup triumph as coach of Barça; winning a penalty in the 1974 World Cup Final; on the Barça bench

Deferring the doubt

Why Leeds players were right to hesitate over the pay-cut plea

LEEDS UNITED PLAYERS were buried under an avalanche of criticism after they refused to accept an instant pay deferral to aid the struggling club's fight for financial survival. But I believe they acted correctly.

Leeds, £80 million in debt, were due to present a rescue plan to creditors, and chief executive Trevor Birch appeared to have little option but to sell the few remaining stars such as goalkeeper Paul Robinson, England striker Alan Smith, Australian centre-forward Mark Viduka and teenage starlet James Milner.

Birch then asked the players to take the pay deferral, which meant accepting an immediate pay cut of one third that would be repaid in full at the end of the season. By that time, hopefully, the ownership and financial issues would have been resolved.

But to the dismay of fans and media the players refused. Next day's headlines were sharp and to the point. "Shame on You," screamed one newspaper, echoing general sentiment that these highly-paid sportsmen should have put the club's needs before their own selfish concerns.

Typical of fans' comments was that of John Boocock, chairman of Leeds United Supporters' Trust. He said: "The players are being very selfish, very stupid, very badly advised – or all three."

But I am in the tiny minority who think the players were absolutely right.

'The players had little grasp of the depth of Leeds' financial woes'

The British industrial tradition is that workers in a failing company (or footballers in a failing club) are kept in ignorance as long as possible. The reasons are fourfold: first, the company's directors always hope for a miracle; second, revealing the truth to employees would wreck morale and quality of work; third, Stock Exchange regulations restrictions; fourth, telling the players would have been tantamount to telling their agents and then the facts would have been gossiped throughout football.

The players, it seems, had little real grasp of the depth of Leeds' financial woes. Yet this had been deliberate. In effect, they had been told: "You concentrate on getting the results right on the pitch, we'll worry about getting financial results right."

Finally, the truth emerged at a meeting brokered by the players' union between directors and footballers. That was when the players were asked to accept the pay deferral to keep the club afloat. So why were they right to hesitate?

Living on the edge

Firstly, in such circumstances no one should ever allow themselves to be bounced into a knee-jerk decision of serious personal and corporate significance; more time can always be found.

Secondly, players (like most of us) live to the edge of their earnings and a pay deferral would have affected their mortgages, loans, savings, etc; not a hit to be taken lightly.

Thirdly, if Leeds were relegated they would probably go bankrupt almost immediately. Then the players would never see their deferred wages; they would merely join the long list of creditors who could expect no more than a few pence in the pound.

Fourthly, when those players sought another club they would be at the mercy of prospective employers who knew they were bartering contract demands from a position of grovelling weakness.

One newspaper had claimed Leeds needed to sell only one of their stars to raise the £5m necessary to survive to the season's end. Suddenly that solution was forgotten.

No wonder the players felt too confused to make an instant decision. Sometimes we forget – footballers are people, too.

Reduced circumstances...the players were asked to take a pay cut to help keep the club in business

One name, two different players

Odd how different players suit different clubs. A top scorer at one club cannot hit the target for love nor money at another; a playmaker who opens the road to goal match after match suddenly loses his accuracy in another setting.

One manager thinks a player is a superstar, another thinks he is a waste of money.

A prize example is the 28-year-old Croat defender Boris Zivkovic. Some 18 months ago he was an international hero – playing for Croatia at the World Cup after helping Bayer Leverkusen finish Champions League runners-up to Real Madrid.

Out of the door...Zivkovic

Then Leverkusen fell apart. Last summer Zivkovic left on a free transfer and joined promoted English Premiership club Portsmouth. Now he is moving again, back to Germany with Stuttgart – and they are welcome to him, according to Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp.

"Zivkovic's mistakes cost us more goals than probably any other player in the history of the club," said Redknapp. "He was a nightmare. I can remember at least seven mistakes which cost us goals without even stopping to think.

"I don't think he ever really wanted to be here. Probably our training ground and stadium are not up to the standards he'd been used to or thought he was worth.

"Then, suddenly, he decided he wanted to go. Obviously he had Stuttgart up his sleeve. But they are a good team and it'll be interesting to see what he brings to them. Maybe he will do well there, who knows?

"He came to us with a big reputation. But Leverkusen let him go before, didn't they? We won't miss him."

Real row looming over friendly

Real Madrid sports director Jorge Valdano and coach Carlos Queiroz are at odds over a £7million friendly in South Africa.

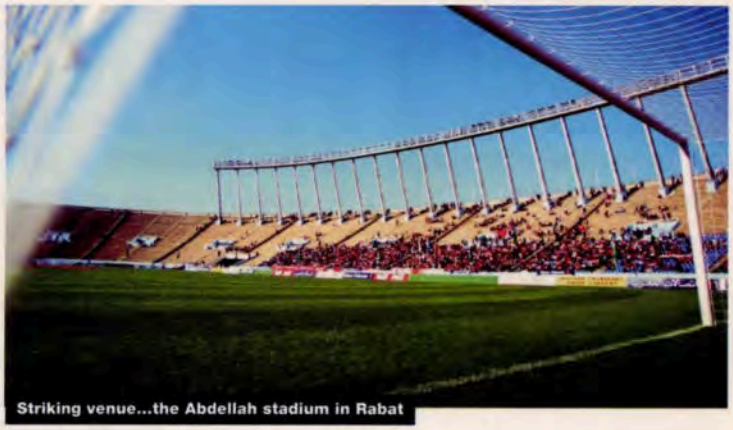
Queiroz, worried about the demands placed on his *galacticos* by a heavy calendar and small squad, asked Valdano to suspend all commercial match trips until the close season.

Valdano, however, has since committed Beckham, Zidane, Raul and co to a friendly in Johannesburg on March 2.

It falls between League matches against Celta Vigo and Racing Santander, and the two crucial Champions League second round legs against Bayern Munich.

Valdano said: "The offer is too important to refuse and, in any case, offers the chance to open up another new market in which to project our brand."

Surely, however, the best branding is the sight of a team winning both the Champions League and their own League championship?



Striking venue...the Abdellah stadium in Rabat

Morocco hope to be fourth time lucky

North Africans won't accept second best with 2010 bid

FOUR YEARS AGO Germany pipped South Africa by one vote to win hosting rights to the 2006 World Cup. More than a decade earlier Morocco similarly lost to the USA in the race for 1994. Morocco, three-times losers now, will not contemplate the same fate yet again.

Egypt, Libya, South Africa and Tunisia are their rivals in the vote in Zurich on May 15 when FIFA's executive launch rotation with the award of the first Africa-staged World Cup.

"Our bid represents a new Morocco, built on solid financial foundations," says bid president Saad Kettani.

"We have played a significant historical role in African football. We are also an ideal location for the World Cup because we have exciting cities full of history and character.

"This is our fourth bid. But we have nothing to be ashamed of in what went before. We lost to France for 1998 by only three votes."

But bidding to host the World Cup is not merely about staging football matches, as the Moroccans have finally realised. The first time they bid for a World Cup their effort was routinely dismissed as "one stadium and eight holes in the ground". But a lot has changed since 1988.

Morocco has three stadiums that need only minor redevelopment (in Fes, Rabat and Casablanca), three already under construction (Marrakech, Tangier and Agadir) and a further three designed and ready to build if the vote goes their way (El Jadida, Meknes and the Casablanca Grand'Stade, which would host the Final).

Significantly, the Moroccans have decided to scrap the logistically wasteful – not to say nonsensical – practice of taking all the teams around all the venues. Hence each group would be based on a pair of stadiums, easing pressure on accommodation, transport and security.

Morocco is also hoping to help fans by controlling accommodation costs. Hotel prices will be pegged in 2007 and then they can increase over the following three years only in line with inflation.

Various training complexes already exist in Casablanca under the aegis of top clubs such as Raja and Wydad, and work will soon start on a Clairefontaine-style academy outside Rabat, supported by funds from FIFA's Goal project.

Referees will want for nothing either. They would be billeted at the Palmeraie Golf Palace complex just outside Marrakech, the city earmarked to serve as FIFA's headquarters and be home to a new stadium that would host the opening match.

Palmeraie offers 12 restaurants and 12 bars, plus golf course, camel-riding and spa facilities. It's so luxurious it might make even a FIFA executive committee member jealous.

Kettani claims the monies and development programmes are all virtually in place, and he was also buoyed by Morocco's positive start to the African Nations Cup. That reflected well on the Moroccans, just as the chaos surrounding South Africa's Nations Cup campaign reflected badly on their FA and World Cup bid.

Taking on the world

In an exclusive interview with Keir Radnedge, G-14's general manager Thomas Kurth explains how the grouping developed to take on the establishment on behalf of every club

WORLD SOCCER: How and when did the 'adventure' start?

THOMAS KURTH: Officially we started in September 2000 after a decision by the 14 original clubs. We registered in Brussels, found some provisional offices and created our headquarters. I think what provided the impetus had been the creation of the Champions League in 1992. Before that the clubs had been 'fighting' one another just once maybe every five years. But when the mini-leagues were set up the clubs began meeting each other on a regular basis and realised there were issues in common.

Who were the founder members?

There were eight clubs originally in 1995 who began to talk together: Juventus, Milan, Inter, Liverpool, Bayern Munich, Ajax, Real Madrid and Barcelona. But then it was thought that Manchester United, who were considered maybe the richest and most well-run club, ought to be a member. So then Bayern wanted another German club – which was Borussia Dortmund, who were then very successful in the Champions League; Ajax wanted to keep the balance with another Dutch club – PSV – and Real Madrid said: well, what about our friends from Porto. Two French clubs – Marseille and Paris Saint-Germain – were also invited to join. So that was how we got to the 14 – though the name G-14 was actually created by the media. It was set up as a reaction from the clubs to having decisions imposed upon them. It was a bargaining instrument.

Bargaining with whom?

With the international associations, FIFA and UEFA. You have this pyramid in football. FIFA is at the top, then the confederations, then the national associations. No one club could achieve anything by raising an issue with UEFA. They were always told: you have to go through the national association. But the problem is this: there are many issues in which national associations and the clubs are in conflict – like player release for internationals, for instance – so how could the national associations be expected to take up the grievances of the clubs?

Leading the way ...Thomas Kurth

How are your relations with FIFA and UEFA?

The last time we had a meeting with president [Sepp] Blatter at FIFA was in March 2003. It's not that he doesn't talk with any of us at all. But Blatter is god...of football, at any rate. So he talks to whom he wants. But if Blatter talks to the Real Madrid president it's in his capacity as the Real Madrid president, not acknowledging anything about G-14. UEFA doesn't answer any of our correspondence. Well, different people have different ways of behaving.

So how do you communicate – for example on the issue of compensation for national team selection?

After our last meeting we sent a letter to president Blatter at FIFA and to president [Lennart] Johansson at UEFA setting out our proposals. But we also copied the letter to all the seven national associations relevant to our members so that one way or the other we could get our message through.

'We have raised matters no one at FIFA had considered'

What are the issues in which you have made a difference?

We had some input in the discussions that led to the revision of the transfer regulations. Then there is the matter of the international calendar. We have been able to raise matters no one at FIFA had considered – not because they were opposed to them but because they did not understand, they had never been directly involved. The clubs, instead, are right in the middle and there are practical issues that affect them.

The African Nations Cup has been a problem again for European clubs. Can anything be done?

For a long time now the African Nations Cup has been played in January and early February and we were told it was always that way because of climate and seasons and whatever. Yet this year's host, Tunisia, is also bidding to host the World Cup in 2010. But the World Cup takes place in June! So what is to stop the Africans moving the Nations Cup to June? It doesn't make sense. This year we have the Nations Cup in January and February, the European Championship in June, then the Copa America in July and the Asian Cup after that. Why stagger these tournaments? They could be played in the same international time slot.

But then they would all lose out in terms of television money and sponsors, wouldn't they?

That's exactly right, because they would be competing and they don't want that. But all of this is putting pressure on the clubs because it's the same players from the same clubs who are playing all the big matches in club competitions and national team competitions. And it's the clubs who are footing the bill all the time for the players' wages and insurance and so on.

Nice work for the players, though, being paid twice over?

Not only twice over. Really, they are being paid three times. They go away to a World Cup or European Championship and play a few games and come back to their clubs and say: "Now I'm a big player internationally so you have to pay me more."

FIFA wants those same players again for its Club World Championship, doesn't it?

The last time G-14 met Blatter we spoke about this. We said we were not totally against it but we said we would want to be consulted if FIFA decided to go ahead with something that involved the clubs. It would be good if we could be in from the beginning and give our input, have a say. We think that must be in everyone's interests.

Obviously FIFA will need G-14 clubs for its Club Championship, to attract television and sponsors. Couldn't

Shoulder to shoulder...Manchester United, Real Madrid and co want compensation for international player release

that be a negotiating tool over compensation for player release?

Perhaps. But one of the things that has surprised me is the attitude of some of the people in the international associations, particularly UEFA, towards the clubs. They want to wield the power and impose their decisions all the time on the clubs. But this is a different world to the one when FIFA and then UEFA were created. When FIFA revised its statutes last year the changes were described as being only minor ones. I didn't understand that. After all, FIFA is 100 years old! A lot has changed in the world in those 100 years. You cannot expect to go on running your business, your sport, the same way you did it then. UEFA has changed more dramatically, possibly, in the past 10 years but much more change is still required.

Such as structures?

I said before: how can the national associations properly represent the interests of clubs with which they come into conflict? It's just not possible because they will always impose the result they want on the clubs. The clubs need to be in there somewhere with a right to be heard.

Compensation is not the same as expecting the national associations to pay all the players' wages?

No, of course not. This is a problem of bad publicity, of wrong perceptions. What we have proposed is that a certain sum, say five to 10 per cent, of the total revenues from a World Cup or Euro finals be paid direct to all the clubs, pro rata, for the number of players they provide. I mean, all the clubs, not only the G-14 clubs. This is a fight that must benefit every club. We made a study of the last World Cup and worked out that it involved the players in 24,000 man hours, including preparation and the finals. And who paid the wages? The clubs.

So the compensation argument concerns only the major finals?

Yes. We have no problem with player release for qualifying matches. It's normal that players want to play for their countries, and the clubs also accept that the national associations have important jobs for which they need to generate revenue – for administration, for refereeing and discipline, for social work. That's not an issue.

Some national associations, like Holland's, already make compensation payments to clubs, don't they?

They do, but the Dutch federation makes those payments only to Dutch clubs. Surely, it is logical that the same payments should be made to, say, Barcelona, for Kluivert and Cocu and Davids. And it's not fair one association does it and another does not. That is another reason for having an agreement directly with FIFA or UEFA.

You set FIFA and UEFA a mid-February deadline to reply on the player compensation issue. What happens if they ignore it?

We would have to ask a higher authority than FIFA whether the rules demanding the release of players for national teams have legal status. We would file a complaint with the European Commission and with the relevant legal bodies. I think that procedure makes sense. If the decision is that the rules are legal then, OK, we stay as we are. But if the rules are not legal, then the clubs will have the right to refuse their players permission to play for their countries. We will have to see – if it gets that far.

Bad timing... European clubs are hit during the African Nations Cup

'If it's felt other clubs fit the criteria, they can join G-14'

Back to G-14. Last year, you gained four more members. Will there be other clubs joining?

I don't see why not. We are always talking to other clubs. If it's felt that they fit the criteria, then they can join.

Celtic have been the subject of speculation. Could you envisage them joining without Rangers?

I think the way they work at this level is in tandem. They have worked like that with sponsorships in the past. If Celtic were to join, then I think Rangers would also join. They are big clubs who play in a comparatively small league, which is difficult for them. But, also, you cannot penalise them for that. The one stipulation for new clubs is that there has to be unanimity among the present members. We have three issues on which unanimity is essential: one is expansion, one is our objectives, and the third is the siting of the headquarters.

It's been reported G-14 might move its headquarters away from Brussels because of a problem over tax breaks?

We are not moving from here. We chose Brussels because this is the heart of the new Europe, in terms of legal structures and so on. UEFA has opened an office here as well now. Maybe to keep an eye on us! But it's true that the tax situation is not as favourable as, say, Switzerland if G-14, at some stage, wanted to undertake commercial activities.

Maybe you could set up a branch office in Geneva?

That's an interesting idea...

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FOOTBALL MEMORIES

Brian Glanville on his boyhood worship of Arsenal and England's Eddie Hapgood

Idol and inspiration

EDDIE HAPGOOD captained England in the first professional football match I ever saw – in January 1942, against Scotland at Wembley, with snow on the ground.

I was 10 years old; my father took me. It was all colossally exciting. Before the kick-off a Scottish sailor and a soldier with a long tartan scarf came on to the field and cavorted with the Scottish players as they warmed up. No one stopped them.

The teams were presented to Mrs Winston Churchill, who announced breathlessly that she must now be off to meet her husband, due back from seeing Stalin in Moscow.

England won hands down, 3-0, against a Scotland team whose wing-halves were none other than Bill Shankly and Matt Busby. Hapgood was England's left-back, a peerless, elegant, inspiring figure for whom fouling was anathema. He could do no wrong for me, in a team that also included Stanley Cullis, prince of footballing centre-halves, Tommy Lawton, scorer of two goals from centre-forward, Stanley Matthews on the right wing, and the multi-talented Denis Compton at outside-left.

Such was my excitement that when I returned to prep school, I drew one inept picture after another of the game, including one entitled 'Hapgood gets knocked out', which he did. I wrote to him for his autograph, and was delighted to receive it.

Three years later, Hapgood published his autobiography, *Football Ambassador*, and I lapped up its series of cheerful anecdotes. At the end of it, he chose a best-ever team, full of Arsenal men like himself, and indeed, included himself, because he would be "proud to play in such a team".

Alas, by that time things had gone a little wrong. He was no longer left-back for England, nor even for Arsenal. He was, he admitted, a little hurt that the Gunners' manager, George Allison, had agreed to loan him to Chelsea, then Luton. But in my eyes, he was still a star, and his story fascinated me.

Scouting was in its infancy in those days, and Hapgood was well into his teens before his local team, Bristol Rovers, offered him terms. He loftily turned them down, and instead began his professional career with humble non-League Kettering.

That was where Arsenal found him. It was said that when he moved to Highbury he was so frail that he would knock himself out heading the ball, but they built him up on beefsteaks.

'Hapgood was England's left-back, a peerless, elegant, inspiring figure for whom fouling was anathema. To me, he could do no wrong'

Essential figure

Hapgood became an essential figure in the Arsenal team that won five League championships between the wars, three of them in a row, and two FA Cups. He skippered England in the so-called Battle of Highbury of November 1934, when with seven Gunners in the side they beat a ferocious Italy 3-2.

During the war he was, like several other Arsenal players, commissioned in the RAF. When it was over he became manager of Blackburn Rovers and in the second game of the first official post-war season, in August 1946, took his team to Highbury and won 3-1. Irony, indeed. Even, perhaps, a sort of revenge.

Hapgood didn't last long at Blackburn and sank down the League to run Watford, of the Third Division South. He later found himself out of the League at Bath City, but in due course he lost that job, too.

I spoke to him just once, on the phone, when preparing an article about Arsenal, and found him disappointingly prickly. I told him what a hero of mine he had been, which brought the bitter reply: "But now you're a successful journalist and look where I am."

He was, in fact, running a hostel for apprentices of the Atomic Energy Authority at Weymouth. Today, he would be a millionaire.

FROM THE ARCHIVES MARCH 1975

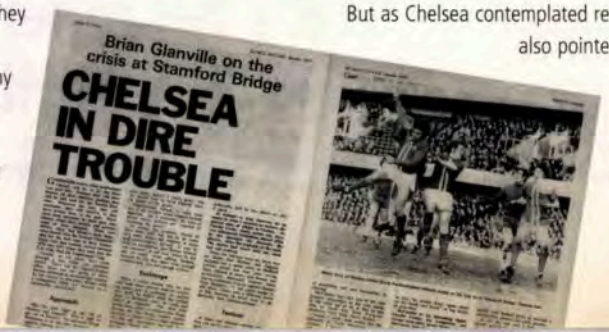
'CHELSEA IN DIRE TROUBLE' screamed the headlines in *World Soccer* 29 years ago.

Less than four years earlier, Chelsea had won the European Cup-winners Cup. Now they were in danger of relegation from Division One. Indeed, two months later, they were to suffer that fate.

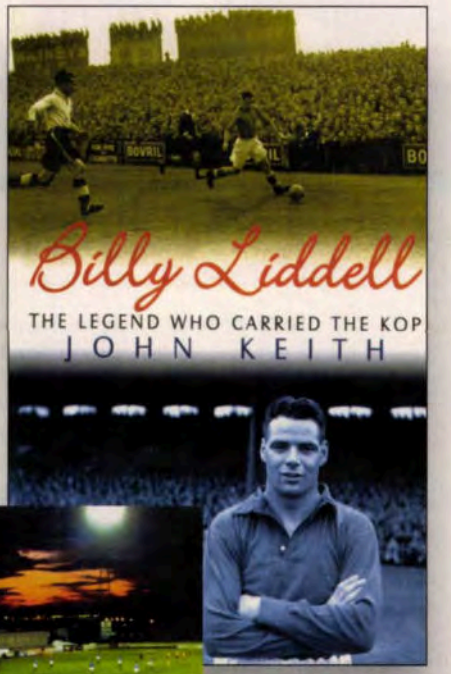
Brian Glanville had many questions. "Were the club right to get rid of Alan Hudson and Peter Osgood? Were they right to get rid of manager Dave Sexton and appoint Ron Stuart and Eddie McCreadie as the new tandem?"

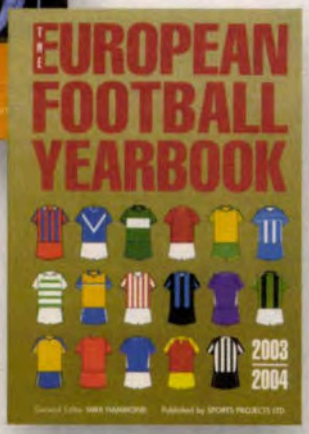
It would be impossible to find definitive answers, but "after the euphoria of the early 1970s, tactics had stood still; the team had not evolved".

But as Chelsea contemplated relegation, Glanville also pointed out: "The club have ridden many storms in the past. They are practised survivors."


Brian Glanville on the crisis at Stamford Bridge

CHELSEA IN DIRE TROUBLE





BOOKS

Billy Liddell: The Legend Who Carried The Kop
by John Keith (Robson, £16.95)
The name of Billy Liddell won't mean much to today's Liverpool fans, but this is the story of one of the club's greatest players. It's a tale of football from another era, but it's one well worth telling.

Football In Our Time
by Stuart Clark (Mainstream, £20)
A fantastic photographic record of British football over the past 14 years. All forms of football life are captured in brilliantly-observed detail.

The European Football Yearbook 2003-2004
edited by Mike Hammond (Sports Projects, £24.95)
The annual guide to the European game, now in its 13th year. Well worth the outlay.

FOOTBALL LINGO

#1 Pedelar

Pedelar (from the Portuguese word for a pedal) is a Brazilian trick that involves stepping over the moving ball with alternate feet, in a motion that resembles pedalling a bicycle. It is designed to throw the defender off balance. It made the name of Santos winger Robinho in the Final of the 2002 Brazilian championship. He stepped over the ball seven times before being brought down in the penalty area by the thoroughly confused right-back.

QUIZ

mitre

WIN a top-quality Mitre football

Mitre has kindly donated a top-quality football for this month's Quiz. The first correct entry selected at random after March 19 will win the ball.

SEND YOUR ENTRY, ON A POSTCARD, TO:
March quiz, *World Soccer*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

What is the stadium featured in this picture?

JANUARY QUIZ WINNERS

1ST PRIZE
Gordon Beveridge, Darwen.

5 RUNNERS-UP
John Fagan, Linlithgow; Peter West, Blackburn; Julie Bunn, March; I Hesketh, Accrington; David Pallister, Lytham.

We asked you to name the player who has scored the fastest hat-trick in the European Cup/Champions League?

ANSWER
Mike Newell, nine minutes (for Blackburn v Rosenborg, December 6, 1995)

Bottoms up

Howard Johnson reports on the Division Three club attracting crowds of more than 20,000

Face of the future...Ben Burgess (centre) celebrates another goal for Hull

ENGLAND

AS LEEDS UNITED'S highly-paid yet underperforming players defer wages to the value of £2.5 million in an attempt to stave off administration, less than 60 miles away a squad of infinitely less well-paid footballers have been enjoying work in an environment dominated not by fear of the future, but anticipation of it.

Hull City may currently play in Division Three (the lowest rung of the Football League ladder), their best-known player may be Australian striker Danny Allsop, signed from Second Division Notts County for £50,000, and they may turn out in one of the country's least glamorous regions. But the club's tale is a remarkable one of hope in a time when it seems the future is bleak for all but the privileged few.

Hull are odds-on certainties for promotion under former England Under-21 manager Peter Taylor after finishing an unremarkable 13th in 2002-03. They play in a new, all-seater stadium and consistently pack in crowds of over 20,000 – this in a division where average gates hover around the 5,000 mark.

Remarkable stuff, made all the more incredible by the fact that just three years ago it looked as if Hull would lose its football club completely. Health club entrepreneur and former tennis star David Lloyd bought the Tigers in 1997, making all the right noises about the potential of the catchment area and the desire to turn Hull City into real contenders. But what actually happened was that Lloyd almost ruined the club, then sold them and locked up their dilapidated ground, Boothferry Park, as a winding-up order was about to be heard.

Two Harrogate-based businessmen, Adam Pearson and Peter Wilkinson, stepped in to negotiate settlements with the club's creditors and allow Hull City to start afresh. However, it was the involvement of Kingston-upon-Hull city council that really galvanised the rejuvenation of the lowly club. The council owned a telecoms company, Kingston Communications, which had successfully floated on the Stock Exchange in July 1999. This meant that there was money in the kitty and plenty of it – almost unheard of for a local council.

A variety of projects were funded by the sudden influx of cash, the most exciting of which was the development of a £45m sports and leisure complex, including a 25,000-seater stadium. By October 2001 contractors were on site, and the KC stadium was completed by December the following year. Both Hull City and Hull Sharks rugby league team took up offers of tenancy alongside basketball and netball clubs.

The effect on football attendances was instant and spectacular. Whereas City had attracted average crowds of around 9,000 to Boothferry Park, the

Mr Motivator...manager Peter Taylor

inaugural celebration friendly against Sunderland to open the new stadium brought in a massive 22,467, most of whom have remained loyal ever since.

The club's press officer, Brendan Smurthwaite, experienced the lows of the Lloyd era and is in no doubt as to the effect of the move. "It's been the catalyst behind a complete transformation," he says. "There were fans who were sceptical at first, the people who had stood on the same spot at Boothferry Park for decades. But there hasn't been a single person who has come to the KC stadium and not been hugely impressed. It's a fantastic place to watch sport."

Heartening stuff. But what is even more cheering is the fact that Pearson and Wilkinson have learned the lessons of football's most recent boom-and-bust era. When the ITV Digital television deal for clubs outside the top flight collapsed, in some ways Hull City's lack of success worked to their advantage.

Being a low-ranking club with plenty of financial troubles of their own, they had never quite got on board the merry-go-round of paying vastly-inflated wages to average players. And just because chairman and chief executive Pearson could see revenues increasing from higher attendances, and outgoings not spiralling because the council was footing the bill for the new ground, it didn't mean he was suddenly about to spend heavily.

"The club is very well and very sensibly run by Adam," says Smurthwaite. "He doesn't throw money around that he hasn't got." Nor does he allow his manager to do so. Pearson's appointment of Taylor in October 2002 has proved inspired. Many felt he had been hard done by in the national set-up and in his short tenure as manager of Premiership Leicester City and clearly had a lot to prove. Pearson was impressed by his work in the lower leagues with Southend, Gillingham and Brighton, too, and said at the appointment: "He's looking for some stability in his CV and I'm looking to put some stability into the club."

Taylor responded: "I know Hull are in Division Three, but they're much bigger than that." He knew, however, success would have to be built, not bought. Smurthwaite said: "Peter's spent £100,000 here and £50,000 there, but he's been very prudent. He's buying players in their early 20s, like Alton Thelwell from Spurs and Ben Burgess from Oldham, who won't just be able to get us out of this division, but can take us further. It's a long-term plan and the place is buzzing. These are young lads who will get better."

Chasing dreams is what football clubs are all about. Nothing worthwhile on the pitch ever happened without ambition off it. But it is how you go about the chase that is important. Hull had a massive dose of good fortune when the council footed the bill for their stadium, but their dreams of glory are still underpinned by a willingness to deal with financial realities.

There seems very little chance that they will go mad and 'do a Leeds'. Why? Because this amazing story has been produced by simply accepting one of football's oldest and hoariest cliches – you can't just buy success. Not even if your name is Abramovich!

Perrin pays price

Marseille sack coach after defeats in League and Europe

FRANCE

IT'S A FAMILIAR story. When a club president offers his public support to a coach, you know he is close to being sacked – especially at Olympique Marseille.

That is exactly what happened to Alain Perrin last month. Perrin, voted coach of the year by *L'Equipe*, is now unemployed, sacked after 18 months in the Marseille 'volcano'.

The case against him was strong: eight defeats in 19 League matches this season, disliked by his players, a poor Champions League campaign against Real Madrid and FC Porto, and even insulted by fans at a reserve game, forcing him to leave the stadium for his own safety.

It was only a matter of time before Perrin reached the end of the road. Just a week after his vote of confidence, president Christophe Bouchet called a press conference. "Never has any president given such support to a Marseille coach, despite the defeats," he said. "But Perrin was not able to communicate with the team."

For a while, it had looked as if a miracle might be possible. Against Strasbourg in the Cup, his first game for Marseille, Fabien Barthez saved two penalties and scored one himself in the 4-3 shoot-out win following a 1-1 draw. But the keeper, who has not been welcomed by the fans or players because he has displaced the popular Croat Vedran Runje, was unable to instil a new spirit in the side. A week later, they were beaten 2-0 by Auxerre.

Marseille's new coach is Jose Anigo, a former OM player, coach of the B team and, for four games in 2001-02, handed the first-team reins following the resignation of Tomislav Ivic before being dismissed after clashing with then sports director Bernard Tapie.

"Anigo is a top man," says Bouchet, "because he was courageous enough to resist Tapie's pressure."

Indeed, Anigo is a strong character who will demand a lot from his players. He is not a blackboard coach, although he has switched to a 3-5-2 system from Perrin's preferred 4-4-2. He was lucky in his first game, a 3-2 home win over nine-man Lens. Russian Dmitri Sychev scored the last-minute winner, but has now returned to his homeland, signed by Lokomotiv Moscow in a four-year deal.

Perrin, meanwhile, in his first interview since his departure, would say only: "Sometimes players don't accept the idea of discipline, but I refuse to say any more and add to this mess."

Anigo is already under pressure following a 2-1 defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in the Cup, a poor 1-1 draw with Metz and a 2-1 defeat by Sochaux in the League. But given his status as a local man and the general chaos at the club, the fans are more likely to focus their bitterness on Bouchet, who has never been popular because he hails from Paris.

So the race is on to see who loses his job first, Anigo or Bouchet.

Erik Bielderman

Finger of fate...Alain Perrin

What's this ear?...keeper Jan Moons sports his experimental earpiece as he and his team-mates hail the win over Club Brugge

Ear we go as Genk get the message

BELGIUM

RACING GENK TOOK Belgian football into a new technological era when they fixed goalkeeper Jan Moons up with an earpiece for the home League match against Club Brugge to enable him to take instructions for the team from the sidelines.

Coach Sef Vergoossen came up with the novel idea – although the instructions were actually related to Moons by goalkeeping coach Guy Martens – and the players responded by beating the defending champions 1-0.

Vergoossen, not surprisingly, was delighted at the outcome. "I often looked like a joker shouting from the touchline while the boys could not hear me," he explained. "The aim is to give instructions, but only two or three times a game. We could find nothing in the rules banning the use of ear devices and chose Jan as the goalkeeper has the best view of what's happening."

FIFA has yet to comment, but it could well be that it outlaws the use of such aids.

Moons, who somewhat fortunately perhaps could not talk back, said using the system in a competitive game had not been as easy as during trial runs in training. "Playing in front of 24,000 is something else," he said. "I had good reception in the warm-up but during the match there were a lot of disturbing noises in my ear as well."

It is believed that spectators using mobile phones caused the interference.

The experiment didn't work so well the following week. Genk went down 4-3 at struggling Charleroi, who had scored only 10 goals in their previous 18 games. Enjoying the moment, the scoreboard operator flashed up the message "What can have happened to Genk's ear?" as his side went 4-1 up.

Club Brugge recovered from their defeat by Genk to win the derby against Cercle Brugge, 5-0. Meanwhile, Anderlecht extended their lead at the top to 12 points with a 2-0 win over Gent. Luigi Pieroni scored a hat-trick for Mouscron as they beat Mons 3-2 despite finishing with nine men following the dismissals of Jean-Philippe Charlet and Alexandre Teklak.

Nicholas Harling

AUSTRIA

Krankl: Bring on England

National coach Hans Krankl expressed his satisfaction after it was agreed that Austria would open their 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign against England in Vienna in September.

"Playing England first, at home, was actually my initial wish after the draw," said Krankl following January's meeting in Cardiff to determine the Group 6 schedule.

"They will still be tired from playing in Portugal [at Euro 2004]. The further they go, the more exhausted they will be when they play us. Moreover, the Premier League will barely have started by then, so the players who have not been at Euro 2004 will lack match practice."

Austria face two more UK sides – Wales and Northern Ireland – in their group, plus Poland and Azerbaijan.

Harry Miltner

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Mathews takes award

Alan Mathews, who led Longford Town to win the FAI Cup for the first time last season, was named the Soccer Writers' Personality of the Year. His team, who finished fourth in the League, beat St Patrick's Athletic 2-0 in the Final last October.

Financial cutbacks at last term's League runners-up Bohemians meant assistant manager Liam O'Brien did not have his contract renewed. The former Republic midfielder has now joined Shamrock Rovers as assistant to Liam Buckley.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Andermatt in at Vaduz

Martin Andermatt has been named as the new coach of Vaduz. The 42-year-old, who arrives from Swiss top division side Wil 1900, succeeds Walter Hormann, now in charge of Salzburg in Austria.

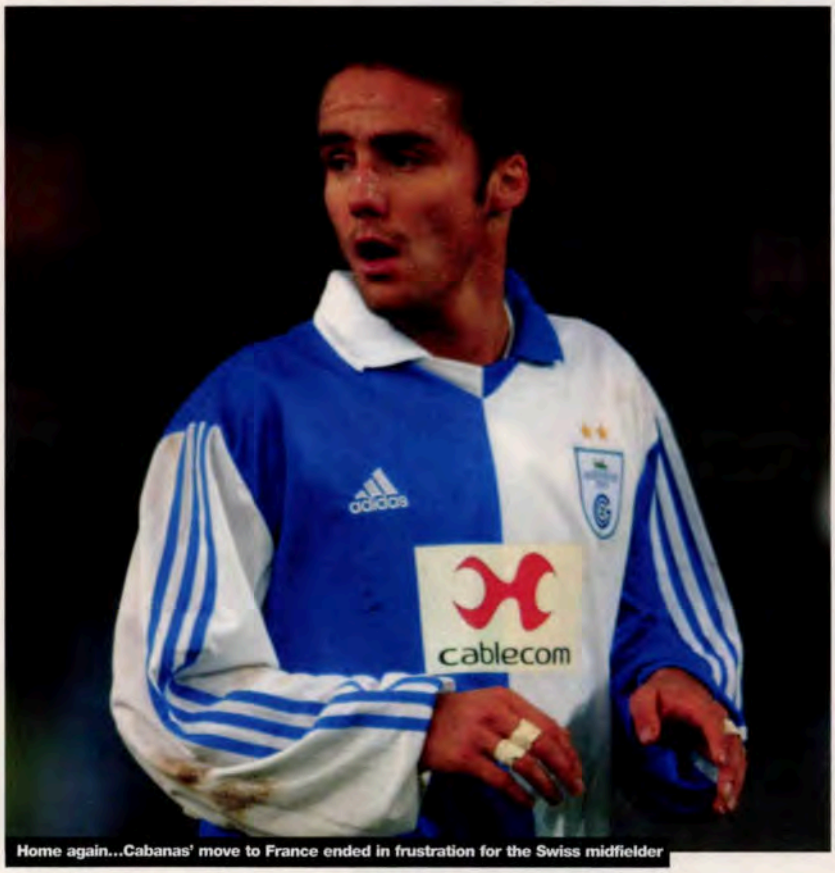
Andermatt's assistant is Roland Wildhaber, a top-scoring striker with Vaduz in the 1970s and who also worked with Andermatt at Wil.

The new coaching team faced a tough start in their new job, as Vaduz, who play in the Swiss Challenge League (Second Division), were set to meet title favourites Lucerne in their first game after the winter break.

Graeme Crawford

Cabanas comes back

SWITZERLAND



Home again...Cabanas' move to France ended in frustration for the Swiss midfielder

SWITZERLAND MIDFIELDER Ricardo Cabanas has made a swift return to Grasshopper following a contract wrangle with French club Guingamp, whom he had joined last summer.

The 24-year-old had become frustrated after being kept waiting for a contract extension.

On his return, Cabanas issued a word of warning to future legionnaires, saying: "France, or any other country, is not paradise for a Swiss. You end up as a 'super sub' and spend most of the time warming the bench."

Meanwhile, League leaders Basle have lost the services of two of their best players, Marco Streller and Hakan Yakin, both to Stuttgart in the Bundesliga.

Streller, 22, was top scorer in the League in the first half of the season with 13 goals. His form earned him his international debut in October in a crucial Euro 2004 qualifier against the Republic of Ireland.

Playmaker Yakin had only recently returned to Basle after an abortive move to Paris Saint-Germain in the summer. The 26-year-old international left France after undergoing surgery on a groin problem against the wishes of PSG. Yakin's popularity has plummeted since he returned to Basle, his hometown club, after it was announced he was leaving his partner and their three-month-old daughter.

The Football League has said that in line with the Swiss bid to join the European Union there will be no limit to the number of players from EU countries allowed in a team. The new policy is implemented with immediate effect. The first club to benefit are Basle, who have two Argentinians – Matias Delgado and Julio Hernan Rossi – due to qualify for Italian passports.

Ivar von Rulach

Gullit handed Feyenoord reins

HOLLAND

RUUD GULLIT, currently in charge of Holland's Under-20 side, has been unveiled as the new coach of Feyenoord from next season. The former Chelsea and Newcastle boss will succeed Bert Van Marwijk, who decided not to renew his contract.

Technical director Rob Baan has also quit, and is replaced with immediate effect by Willem II coach Mark Wotte.

The Rotterdam club, for whom Gullit once played, have underperformed this season, and were fourth, 12 points behind leaders Ajax, at the winter break.

Before taking up the post, Gullit is scheduled to be an assistant to senior national team coach Dick Advocaat at the Euro 2004 finals.

The drastic changes did not come as a surprise. Feyenoord's results have been precarious, mainly because of the departure of key players Pierre Van Hooijdonk, Paul Bosvelt, Brett Emerton and Bonaventure Kalou last summer. Their replacements have not proved adequate, and Baan, who oversees transfers, has taken the blame.

His job fell vacant at a good time for Wotte, having been told by Willem II his contract would not be renewed next season after falling out with director Barry Hulshoff.

Wotte's assistant, Andre Wetzel, has taken the reins until the end of the season, when RBC Roosendaal boss Robert Maaskant will take over.

Heerenveen have lined up Gertjan Verbeek to succeed Foppe De Haan, the longest-serving coach in Holland, who is retiring at the end of this campaign. Verbeek, currently at Second Division club Heracles Almelo, was a former player and assistant coach at the Frisian side.

Ajax defender Petri Pasanen has gone on loan to Portsmouth in England, while his Brazilian team-mate Wamberto joined Belgium's Mons. Hungarian keeper Gabor Babos will join Feyenoord from NAC Breda in the summer, while Den Haag have signed former Ajax player Tarek Oulida and taken Japanese midfielder Kazuyuki Toda from Tottenham on loan. NEC Nijmegen enticed Polish international striker Andrzej Niedzielan from Groclin Grodzisk.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

New challenge...Gullit

Change of direction...Frank De Boer salutes his goal against Scotland but now finds himself in the Scottish Premier League

De Boers back together again

SCOTLAND

RANGERS MANAGER ALEX McLEISH gave the club's flagging season a lift by reuniting Holland central defender Frank De Boer with his twin Ronald at club level.

Frank joined the Ibrox side – 11 points behind Celtic after 22 games – on what is initially a short-term contract after a disappointing few months at Galatasaray. He is hoping that the move will bolster his chances of winning back a first-team place in the national side at Euro 2004.

The twins previously played together at Ajax and, for one season, Barcelona.

The arrival of Frank De Boer, who scored against Scotland during the Euro 2004 qualifying play-offs, was one of the few signings made by top division clubs during the transfer window.

Rangers missed out on Spanish winger Nacho Novo after failing to find even the relatively modest £500,000 asked by financially-stricken Dundee. Meanwhile, talented Kilmarnock youngster Peter Canero joined Leicester in the English Premiership after Celtic also proved unable to meet what was another less-than-extortionate asking price.

Alan Fairley

DENMARK

Home boys flop on tour

National coach Morten Olsen will have to rely on his overseas stars at the Euro 2004 finals after a squad of home-based players disappointed during a three-match tour of North America in January. The Superliga selection dominated the prestige game against the United States, but could only draw 1-1 thanks to a penalty from Thomas Roll Larsen.

"We lost our way tactically in the game, and we weren't good enough technically," said a pessimistic Olsen.

Far worse was a 3-1 defeat by a side made up of players from Major League Soccer. The only consolation was a fine performance from striker Tommy Bechmann, who scored after coming on as a second-half substitute. The Esbjerg youngster also impressed in the final match, another 3-1 defeat, against El Salvador club CD Aguila.

Back home, OB Odense have hired former FC Midtjylland coach Troels Bech. Struggling Frem have taken Estonian striker Indrek Zelinski and Swedish defender Jonas Stark on loan as they battle against relegation.

Jim Holden

SWEDEN

Come back, Henrik

Nearly 20 months after bowing out of the national team, Celtic's Henrik Larsson is being asked to make one last comeback in the Euro 2004 finals.

The Swedish media have mounted a strong campaign to lure back the 32-year-old striker from exile, while even UEFA president Lennart Johansson – himself a Swede – has written to Larsson expressing his hope he would do one last service for his country.

"I just made a personal wish; I was not trying to put any pressure on Larsson," claimed Johansson when news of his letter emerged and met with some criticism.

Larsson has refused to comment on a potential return, although he has already once stepped into the breach since announcing his international retirement after the 2002 World Cup. The forward, who has scored 24 goals in 73 internationals, agreed to play for Sweden in a Euro 2004 qualifier in Hungary last April after several attackers were sidelined by injury.

Many regard Larsson's silence on the current campaign as a sign that he has already struck up some kind of agreement with joint national coaches Lars Lagerback and Tommy Soderberg.

Surrounded by transfer rumours, with potential future employers including Barcelona and Newcastle, Larsson has even said he might retire altogether after the current season. Perhaps Portugal could be a fitting place for a last hurrah?

Malmo, as expected, got their wish and signed World Cup defender Patrik Andersson after his release by Barcelona. Hammarby lost midfielder Kennedy Bakircioglu to Greece's Iraklis.

Pentti Hietanen

FINLAND

Crunch time for Jokerit

FC Jokerit, League runners-up three years ago, are in dire straits with the new season just around the corner. Coach Pasi Rautiainen has only 11 players under contract and for a time it looked as if the club might not even bother to apply for a new League licence.

Jokerit chief Harry Harkimo, who also runs the club's ice-hockey team and has been building ice-hockey stadiums in Germany, has apparently become totally disillusioned with the Finnish football industry.

Clearly, he is trying to get rid of the footballing section of his business empire, but there would appear to be few takers for a club with no tradition and no solid fan base.

Tampere United have lost Finland forward Jari Niemi to Mons of Belgium. The 27-year-old showed his worth by scoring twice on his League debut for his new club.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Arason to England

National team goalkeeper Arni Gautur Arason has become the latest Icelander to move to England, joining Premiership club Manchester City until the end of the season. Arason parted company with Norwegian champions Rosenborg at the end of last year.

Iceland will kick off their World Cup qualifying campaign at home to Bulgaria next September, followed by visits to Hungary and Malta.

Rab Christie

WALES

TNS and Rhyl in two-horse race

Total Network Solutions, a point clear, and Rhyl appear to have set up a two-horse race for the League title, with the latter eight points ahead of third-placed Aberystwyth at the end of January.

At the bottom, Barry Town had taken just three points from their first 20 games. The defending champions, who are in administration, appear certain to go down since the likely promotion winners from the two feeder divisions seem able to meet the top-flight ground requirements.

Mel Thomas

Aage refreshed by Carlsberg

NORWAY

AAGE HAREIDE GOT the best possible start as national team manager when his side won the Carlsberg Cup in Hong Kong after two convincing victories.

Harald Brattbakk, voted player of the tournament, scored his first international goal for nine years to spark Norway's 3-1 win over Honduras in the Final. Although the Central Americans equalised, Frode Johnsen headed Hareide's side back in front, and Magne Hoseth rounded off the scoring following a poor back-pass from a Honduran defender.

Norway reached the Final after beating arch-rivals Sweden 3-0. Johnsen put them ahead in the first half, with Havard Flo scoring twice after the break.

Hareide succeeded Nils Johan Semb at the end of last year advocating the introduction of a much more attacking style. The high number of goals will have given him reason to believe the plan is already working well.

The coach was also keen to use the tournament to assess the merits of his home-based players, and to that end took a wholly Scandinavia-based squad to Hong Kong.

"I want competition for places to be as tough as possible," said Hareide. "When the players have learnt the framework of my attacking style, I will select those who can fulfil my aims. Everybody is on an equal footing and playing for a big foreign club will not guarantee you automatic selection."

Norway, inspired by the brilliant Hoseth, emphasised their new attacking prowess by beating Singapore 5-2 in a subsequent friendly. Flo scored another two goals, with debutant Anders Stadheim also on the scoresheet.

Back home, promoted Fredrikstad have signed Dag Hornseth and Tor Trondsen from Rosenborg, and Simen Brenna (Moss).

Sigurd Odegaard

Probably the best...Norway celebrate their Carlsberg Cup success

New man at the helm...Sanchez

Sanchez to the rescue

NORTHERN IRELAND

LAWRIE SANCHEZ, the former Northern Ireland midfielder and recently in charge of English Second Division club Wycombe Wanderers, has been handed the task of restoring the national side's fortunes.

The 44-year-old was chosen over favourite Jimmy Nichol, another ex-international, whose financial demands were too high.

Sanchez, who succeeds Sammy McIlroy, won three caps in the late 1980s and scored Wimbledon's FA Cup-winning goal in the 1988 Final against Liverpool. As a coach, he guided Wycombe to the FA Cup semi-finals in 2001. He takes over a Northern Ireland side that have slipped to 124th place in the FIFA rankings after finishing bottom of their Euro 2004 qualifying group.

There have also been coaching changes at club level. Bottom side Glenavon have put ex-Larne boss Tom Kincaid at the helm, replacing Alfie Wylie. The new man got off to a dream start as Glenavon beat local rivals Portadown 1-0 in the Irish Cup. However, they then lost 4-0 in the League to Newry Town, now also under new management. The outspoken Roy McCreadie has taken the reins after 12 years at Omagh Town. His replacement is former Ballymena United and Derry City striker Jonathan Speak.

League leaders Linfield suffered a blow when influential midfielder Phil Charnock was sidelined for a year with a cruciate ligament injury.

Roy Kitson

Stand-off...Samsunspor players and a Turkish federation official confront irate Besiktas substitutes on the touchline during the teams' explosive League game

Black Eagles see red

TURKEY

AN EXTRAORDINARY WEEK for Turkish football ended in a sea of red as League leaders and champions Besiktas had five players sent off at home to Samsunspor, forcing the game to be abandoned.

Days earlier, Fenerbahce had beaten Rizespor 4-1 in a controversially replayed match to begin yapping at the heels of the top side. The restaging, on January 18, had been ordered after the referee of the original tie, a 1-1 draw in November, had forgotten to send off a Rizespor player to whom he had shown two yellow cards. Fenerbahce's title rivals claimed the replay had given the Istanbul club an unfair advantage, particularly since they were allowed to use players bought during the recent transfer window.

There was trouble from the start of the Besiktas-Samsunspor clash, with the rowdy home fans throwing a shower of snowballs, some hitting referee Cem Papila. Then, upset that the official had not stopped play for offside in the run-up to Samsunspor's first goal, the home players began to object to decisions with increasing vigour.

The quick-on-the-draw Papila replied with a barrage of cards, some deserved, some less so, leaving the Black Eagles three men down at the half-time whistle.

Although they had equalised shortly after Samsunspor scored, the holes in defence and midfield caused by the dismissals meant Besiktas fell 4-1 behind just after the hour mark. This only increased the players' anger, but their ire was soon matched by that of Papila after he was hit hard in the face by another snowball.

He made little effort to calm the game down, and sent off another Besiktas player just after Samsunspor's fourth goal. The dismissal of Ilhan Mansiz with five minutes left forced the abandonment of the game, since teams are allowed to continue playing only with a minimum of seven players.

In the aftermath, the normally placid Mircea Lucescu threatened to resign as coach of Besiktas and leave the country. It was his team's first League defeat since last April and meant they were just five points ahead of Fenerbahce having gone into the winter break nine points clear.

Suna Erdem

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Partizan pick ex-defender

Champions Partizan Belgrade have appointed their former central defender Vladimir Vermezovic as coach, in succession to Lothar Matthaus. After his playing career, Vermezovic, now 40, was assistant to Ljubisa Tumbakovic at Partizan between 2000 and 2002, going on to take charge of Third Division Teleoptik Zemun.

The new man suffered an early blow when Andrija Delibasic was sold to Mallorca for £2.1million. The Under-21 international was practically the only genuine attacker in Partizan's squad.

There have been a number of other top division coaching changes. Bora Cvetkovic was replaced by Radmilo Ivancevic after just five games in charge of Obilic; Branko Smiljanic became the third coach to lead Vojvodina Novi Sad this season; Zemun's Miloljub Ostojic was replaced by Dusan Mitosevic; Dragisa Ilic took over struggling Napredak Krusevac following the departure of Vladislav Djukic; and Zvonko Varga is the new coach of Sartid Smederevo.

Vladimir Novak

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Forward Stojanovic pledges allegiance

The national team have been boosted ahead of the World Cup qualifying campaign by news that centre-forward Nenad Stojanovic has agreed to appear for them. The Leotar player, who finished runner-up in the national scoring chart last term, with 22 goals, made his pledge despite interest from Serbia & Montenegro boss Ilija Petkovic.

The youngster, on loan at the Bosnian champions from Red Star Belgrade, could play for either country.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Prasnikar to sue over corruption claims

National coach Bojan Prasnikar, who recently had his contract extended until the end of the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign, is set to take legal action against an agent who accused him of corruption.

Marijan Vuk has claimed that Prasnikar demanded bribes in return for including the agent's players in the national squad during his first spell in charge of Slovenia.

Zdravko Reic

GREECE

Bayevic quits over boo boys

Dusan Bayevic, one of the most successful coaches in Greek football, walked out on AEK Athens in the middle of a home game after some of the club's own supporters shouted insults about his family.

The 55-year-old left the dugout during a League match with Iraklis Salonika, despite the fact his team were on their way to a 4-0 victory. He told reporters "this is my last match with AEK" before exiting the stadium.

A section of AEK fans has never forgiven Bayevic for a previous departure from the club, in 1996, when he took over at bitter rivals Olympiakos. The Serbia-born coach, who led AEK to four Greek League titles in the late 1980s and early 1990s and then won three with Olympiakos, has been made to feel less than welcome since his return to the club in June 2002. The week before the Iraklis game, he was assaulted by irate supporters outside the Chinese restaurant he owns in an Athens suburb.

Bayevic, a former AEK player, stated last year that he would "kill anyone" who harmed his family after threats were made against them.

Lou Economopoulos

Injured by insults...Dusan Bayevic

Racunica in heart scare

CROATIA

Uncertain future...Dean Racunica

LEAGUE LEADERS Hajduk Split have been hit by news that their best player, Dean Racunica, may have to retire because of a heart condition. The 34-year-old midfielder did not travel to the club's winter training camp in Turkey as doctors conducted further tests to assess the risk of him continuing as a professional.

Meanwhile, Hajduk fans have repeated their threat to boycott home national team games, since Croatia have not played in Split since 1997. "We are against centralism, against the idea that all important matches are played in Zagreb," said a leaflet published by Torcida, the most fervent Hajduk supporter group.

Zdravko Reic

ISRAEL

Maccabi Haifa on top

Maccabi Haifa secured top spot in the Premier League with a convincing 3-0 win over fellow title hopefuls Bnei Yehuda Tel Aviv. Haifa's Croatian midfielder Giovanni Rosso, who has had a number of disagreements with coach Roni Levy in recent months, had a hand in all three goals.

The victory left Haifa ahead of Hapoel Be'er Sheva on goal difference, with Bnei Yehuda third, three points behind the leaders. To add insult to injury, Bnei Yehuda have lost midfield general Ben Luz for the rest of the season after he injured his knee against Haifa.

Derek Fattal

MACEDONIA

No win for new faces

The national team drew 0-0 and then lost 1-0 in two friendly matches away to China at the end of January. Dragan Kanatlarovski, now full-time national coach after giving up his role with League leaders Pobeda, called up four newcomers – forward Dragan Cadikovski, midfielders Almir Bajramovski and Danco Masev, and keeper Jorde Georgievski.

Masev was one of three youngsters sold by Belasica, along with Zoran Baldovaliev and Goran Popov. The club also replaced Serb coach Sinisa Stancic with Zvonko Todorov.

Nikola Ilievski has taken over from Kanatlarovski at Pobeda, whose striker Dragan Dimitrovski was named 2003 Macedonian Player of the Year.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Mifsud back with a bang

International striker Michael Mifsud showed he had lost none of his scoring sparkle after hitting goals in two big League games for Sliema Wanderers having returned to Malta during the winter break. Mifsud, who was released by Kaiserslautern, scored in the 3-0 win away to ex-champions Valletta and then the only goal of the top-of-the-table clash at Birkirkara. The latter were further hit when forward George Mallia was ruled out for the season with a knee ligament injury.

Domenico Aquilina

Titov ban rocks club and country

RUSSIA

THE PLANS OF Moscow Spartak and Russia were thrown into disarray after key midfielder Yegor Titov was banned for a year after failing a drugs test.

The 27-year-old tested positive for the banned substance bromantan following the first leg of the Euro 2004 qualifying play-off against Wales in November and will now miss the finals of that competition and the entire Russian League season.

Until now, Titov has been regarded as one of Russia's most disciplined players. He is the standard bearer for Spartak, having served as team captain for the past three years, and also started the Euro 2004 campaign as Russia's skipper. He yielded that armband only when the vastly experienced Victor Onopko rejoined the squad.

Titov's case has prompted the Russian Football Union to tighten up its drug-testing policy. President Vyacheslav Koloskov has announced that four players from one randomly-chosen game will be tested in each of the 30 rounds of the forthcoming championship campaign.

Victor Gusev

Sidelined...Titov is suspended for Euro 2004 and the Russian League season

Rush to Russia resumes

Pointing east...Marek Kincl has joined Zenit St Petersburg from Sparta Prague

CZECH REPUBLIC

THE STEADY FLOW of players from the domestic League to Russia on lucrative contracts shows no sign of abating. The most recent departees are Sparta forward Marek Kincl – to Zenit St Petersburg – the champions' recently-acquired midfielder Martin Zboncak and Sigma Olomouc striker Stanislav Vlcek – both to Dinamo Moscow – and Slovan Liberec goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky, to Saturn Ramenskoye.

The quartet follow Slavia Prague's Adam Petrous and Richard Dostalek, who agreed contracts with Rubin Kazan in the autumn.

However, in-demand Teplice midfielder Petr Vorisek has bucked the trend, turning down offers from Russian clubs in order to join Sparta. The champions also landed Vorisek's young Teplice team-mate Jan Rezek, who will wear Kincl's No 9 shirt.

Meanwhile, Jiri Nemec's return to Sparta turned out to be a brief one. The inspirational 37-year-old midfielder joined the club last summer but has now moved to Viktoria Zizkov as they bid to avoid relegation.

Sam Beckwith

UKRAINE

Dnipro shore up defence

Dnipro, the only Ukrainian club still in European competition, have suffered a string of injuries to defenders, forcing them to buy some emergency cover. Olexander Radchenko, Gennadiy Moroz and Olexandr Poklonskyi are all doubtful for the UEFA Cup clash against Marseille. To ease the problem they recruited 21-year-old holding midfielder Vitaliy Lysytskyi on loan from Kyiv Dynamo. Later, Dnipro also signed ex-Ukraine keeper Vyacheslav Kernozenko from Arsenal Kyiv.

Meanwhile, Shakhtar signed Romanian defender Flavius Stoican from Dinamo Bucharest; Kyiv Dynamo brought in Belorussian forward Sergei Kornilenko from Dinamo Minsk and 18-year-old Croatian forward Dennis Glavina; and Metalurh Donetsk secured promising Ivory Coast defender Yaya Toure – the brother of Arsenal's Kolo Toure – from Beveren of Belgium.

Metalurh Zaporizhzhya coach Mykhailo Fomenko has resigned after only six months in charge.

Oleg Zadernovsky

GEORGIA

Apkhazava dies after heart stoppage

Young international forward Shalva Apkhazava has died following a sudden heart stoppage in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. The 23-year-old, Georgia's young player of the year in 2001, was based in the city with the Arsenal club, whom he joined in 2002. He made his international debut in February last year in a friendly against Moldova.

Dinamo Tbilisi won the prestigious CIS Champions Cup in Moscow for the first time, beating Latvia's Skonto Riga 3-1 in the Final. The annual tournament is contested by the champion clubs of the former Soviet states.

Oleg Zadernovsky

POLAND

Football fights VAT

The FA and Football League have joined forces in an effort to persuade the government not to impose the maximum value added tax rate on TV broadcasting. The football authorities, who placed full-page campaigning advertisements in national newspapers, fear that the tax could prompt the sport's main backer – cable channel Canal Plus – to withdraw its support, leading to bankruptcy for many clubs.

Even as it is, the harsh economic climate is clearly apparent. Legia Warsaw players are still waiting for their bonuses for winning the 2002 League title, while KSZO Ostrowiec, relegated to the Second Division last year, have now been declared bankrupt.

Dariusz Kurowski

BULGARIA

Old boys boost Levski

Levski Sofia have enticed two old boys back to the fold to boost their UEFA Cup and championship prospects. Midfielder Daniel Borimirov, who won three League titles with the club in the 1990s, has rejoined after more than eight years with 1860 Munich. Defender Georgi Markov returns after just six months away, at Lokomotiv Sofia.

Levski face Liverpool in the UEFA Cup third round and trailed League leaders Lokomotiv by three points at the halfway stage.

Fellow title contenders CSKA Sofia have taken international forward Stoiko Sakaliev on loan from Naftex Bourgas for the remainder of the season and signed former trainee Emil Petkov from Marek Dupnitsa.

Michael Bowesfield

ROMANIA

Steaua sneak advantage

Steaua Bucharest appeared to get one over on city and title rivals Dinamo during the January transfer window after raising £725,000 (a third of their annual budget) from the sale of just one player – Claudiu Raducanu, last season's Romanian League top scorer, to Espanyol of Spain.

Steaua spent some of the money on young rising star Nicolae Dica from Arges Pitesti, while also managing to lure ex-Dinamo player and experienced international Dorinel Munteanu back to Romania after 10 years abroad.

Dinamo also raised £725,000, but that was from the sale of three key players – defenders Flavius Stoican (to Shakhtar Donetsk) and Gabriel Tamas, (Galatasaray), and midfielder Ianis Zicu (Internazionale).

"There is a difference of management performance between Steaua and Dinamo," said leading journalist Catalin Tolontan. "Dinamo continue to be a state club [the Ministry of the Interior still decides Dinamo's general policy on transfers], while Steaua became a private and much more efficient club."

Radu Timofte

SLOVAKIA

Leaders add firepower

League leaders Banska Bystrica have strengthened their attack with the signing of Martin Jakubko. The 23-year-old was Second Division top scorer during the first half of the season after hitting 13 goals for Presov. Bystrica have also signed veteran defender Peter Dzurik. The 35-year-old ex-international quit troubled Slovan Bratislava after being dropped to the reserves.

Another Slovan departee was promising 22-year-old striker Stanislav Sestak, now at Czech side Synot.

Champions Zilina have taken steps to end their goal drought by signing striker Pavol Straka from Dubnica.

Ed Holt

AZERBAIJAN

Musayev ousted

Neftchi Baku chief Ramiz Mirzayev has been named FA president, replacing the controversial Fuad Musayev. The latter had been at the heart of a long-running dispute between the FA and the majority of the clubs, who accused the president of mismanagement.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Last respects...the football community grieves at Feher's funeral

Nation mourns for Miklos

HUNGARY

HUNGARIAN FOOTBALL was in mourning following the sudden death of international forward Miklos Feher. The 24-year-old collapsed near the end of a game for his club Benfica at Guimaraes, shortly after setting up the only goal and receiving a yellow card for time-wasting from referee Olegario Benquerenca. He had been on the pitch for only 30 minutes, having come on as a substitute. Early reports suggested he had suffered a heart attack.

Feher learned his football at Gyor before joining FC Porto as an 18-year-old in 1997. Too raw to break into the first team, he was loaned out to Salgueiros and Braga before returning to Porto's lower ranks. Dissatisfied, he signed for Benfica, but was in and out of the first team, and was considering other offers when tragedy struck.

Feher made 25 appearances for Hungary, scoring seven goals.

Ferencvaros have replaced coach Jozsef Garami with former international Attila Pinter, recently in charge of Sopron.

Peterjon Cresswell

Santos stars corralled as Animal prowls again

BRAZIL

AS NATIONAL CHAMPIONS Cruzeiro pulled off the most spectacular close-season coup by signing Rivaldo from Milan, runners-up Santos could be more than thankful to have hung on to most of their star players.

Teenage pair Diego and Robinho will be at the club for at least another six months, while midfielder Renato and defender Alex both agreed to stay on despite being linked with Milan and Real Madrid respectively.

The most significant Santos departure was goalkeeper Fabio Costa, who left for Corinthians in a straight swap with keeper Doni. Fabio Costa was one of a dozen new signings by the Sao Paulo club as they set out to make up for a dismal 2003 season. The most curious was 37-year-old Colombian Freddy Rincon, who led the Corinthians side that won FIFA's World Club Championship in 2000 but has not played professionally for over a year.

Rio de Janeiro's clubs, meanwhile, appeared to have learned nothing from last year, when Flamengo's eighth place in the Brazilian championship was the best they could manage. Flamengo, where player indiscipline has been rife, began the year with new coach Abel Braga vowing to kick out the so-called 'Flip-Flop Brigade' – a group of players who allegedly spent more time on the beach and around the pool, nursing mysterious 'injuries', than training.

Yet the new regime hardly made an auspicious start. Striker Edilson, one of the brigade's alleged ringleaders, missed the first week of training without explanation, while one of the first new signings was former Brazil defender Junior Baiano, kicked out by Bundesliga side Werder Bremen for one of his many acts of indiscipline.

Vasco da Gama followed suit by signing bible-bashing Marcelinho Carioca, another over-30 with a long history of trouble. The midfielder returns to Brazil after a typically turbulent six months with Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr, who, he claimed, failed to pay him and then confiscated his passport to stop him leaving the country. The Saudis said Marcelinho was indisciplined.

None of this, however, compares to the timebomb that has been placed in the hands of Fluminense's new coach, Valdir Espinosa. Their latest signing is none other than the Animal himself, the one and only Edmundo, now 32. This is the player who was sent off five times during two years with Palmeiras and banned for 40 days for shoving a hand in a referee's face before being sacked for saying the grass needed cutting at the club's Parque Antartica stadium.

During his three stints with Vasco, Edmundo fell out with directors, was sent off more than 10 times, racially insulted a linesman and even upset animal lovers by feeding beer to a chimpanzee during a children's party.

During a one-year spell in Italy with Fiorentina, he infuriated his team-mates by exercising a clause in his contract allowing him to return to Rio for Carnival. Fiorentina were chasing the *scudetto* at the time and strike partner Gabriel Batistuta was injured.

Edmundo was also sentenced to four years in prison for his part in a fatal car crash but, thanks to the incomprehensible intricacies of Brazilian justice, served only one night.

If that is not enough for Espinosa to deal with, Edmundo will be reunited with 38-year-old Romario. The pair were at loggerheads at Vasco four years ago, exchanging insults in the media, arguing over who should take penalties and refusing to celebrate goals together.

The feud started when Edmundo lost the captaincy to Romario before a game, stormed out of the dressing-room and went home. This time, Romario promised, things would be different. "We're all a bit older, especially me," he said. "We're not going to allow any vanity to unsettle the squad."

Brian Homewood

I can't bear to look at you...Edmundo and Romario, who feuded at Vasco da Gama, have been reunited at Fluminense

Wheels and deals...Argentinos Juniors' teenage starlet Lucas Biglia is 'part-owned' by a business consortium

Quick bucks, long-term problem

ARGENTINA

FINANCIALLY-TROUBLED ARGENTINOS JUNIORS have raised £330,000 after selling to a business consortium half the contract of a 17-year-old player who has played only three games for the first team.

The deal highlights a worrying trend in Argentina. Although clubs can raise money quickly by this sort of deal – which typically involve the sale of part or all of a player's contract to an agent – they miss out on most or all of any future transfer fee. They also lose some control over when the player can be sold, hardly helping squad solidarity and team planning.

The 17-year-old, Lucas Biglia, was a member of Argentina's squad at last year's Under-17 World Championship and potentially has a great future. Should he develop as expected, it is likely he could command a large fee from a top European club, but Argentinos Juniors would receive only a part of this.

Recently, Talleres Cordoba and Rosario Central transferred their entire junior divisions to companies – in effect, agents. Under these deals, the companies pay for the players' management and sometimes give the club a modest monthly sum, but in return take a large part of the fee when any of these players move on.

The impermanence on the playing front is being matched at coaching level. There were no fewer than 48 top division coaching changes during 2003, and only six clubs – Arsenal, Boca Juniors, Rosario Central, Newell's Old Boys, Velez Sarsfield and Quilmes – finished the year with the same coach that started it.

Talleres, Olimpo, Nueva Chicago and Chacarita Juniors all had three coaches, but were outdone by Independiente, who made Omar Pastoriza their fourth man in charge during the year. Fittingly, Pastoriza – one of those to try at Chacarita – was taking charge of his fourth different club in 12 months.

Carlos Bilardo put a new twist to the convoluted comings and goings by returning to Estudiantes three months after he quit, citing personal reasons. The 1986 World Cup-winning coach enjoyed impressive results during his five-month reign in 2003.

Bilardo has launched a novel recruiting campaign to find opening championship top scorer Ernesto Farias a strike partner. He is offering £275,000 to any player who can score at least eight goals in the 19-game closing tournament. The catch is that if he does not meet the target he will owe Bilardo half that amount.

Velez Sarsfield hope to prise former player Jose Luis Chilavert out of retirement. The 38-year-old Paraguayan goalkeeper announced he would quit the game after helping Penarol win the Uruguayan championship in December, but recently played for Velez in a pre-season friendly.

Eric Weil

CANADA

High five for A-League

Canada has not had a true national professional championship since the Canadian Soccer League folded in 1990, but no fewer than five of the country's clubs will kick off in the A-League, the United States' Second Division, in April. That is an increase of one on last year, with the new Edmonton Aviators joining existing League members Montreal Impact, Toronto Lynx, Vancouver Whitecaps and Calgary Mustangs.

Other clubs, based in Ottawa, Winnipeg and Hamilton, are set to join the A-League over the next few seasons, suggesting that a separate Canadian League is no nearer fruition.

"Our objective is to see at least six Canadian clubs in action by 2005 as a minimum target," said Canadian Soccer Association president Andy Sharpe. "We have reached an understanding with the A-League that once the six are involved, they would be aligned into a Canadian Division of the A-League."

Travel costs and the memory of past failures are two of the main factors stymying the formation of an independent Canadian League at present.

Philippe Germain

COLOMBIA

Valderrama back in action

Carlos Valderrama has come out of retirement at 42 to play for Union Magdalena. The legendary midfielder had said he was hanging up his boots after the 2002 Major League Soccer season in the United States, where he had played for Tampa Bay Mutiny, Miami Fusion and Colorado Rapids.

He arranged a farewell game for February 1 this year, but it was cancelled after he announced his intention to play for Magdalena, his first club.

Former wonderkid Jhonnier Montano has returned to South America after failing to make the grade with Parma in Italy. The 21-year-old has joined Argentinian Second Division side Ferro Carril Oeste.

Eric Weil

MEXICO

Game frenzy as new year dawns

Although the domestic closing championship did not start until mid-January, there was intense activity for some clubs straight after the New Year as they played a controversial qualification tournament for entry to the Libertadores Cup.

Santos Laguna and America eventually won the right to take part in South America's top club competition, but only after they were forced to play four and six qualifiers respectively in order to reach the first round proper.

The logical move would have been to award Mexico's two Libertadores berths to Monterrey and Pachuca, the winners of the two most recent domestic League championships. However, economic interests came into play. Clearly, there was television money to be made from a qualifying tournament featuring some of Mexico's top clubs. And CONMEBOL, the South American confederation, creamed off much of the money generated by the qualifiers, which were played in front of large ex-pat crowds in the United States.

Cup action...Santos Laguna (green) v Atlas

The all-action start to the year was intensified because many young South American players based in Mexico were absent because of Olympic qualifying commitments.

Toluca, Tecos UAG, Jaguares and Guadalajara were the leaders in the four closing championship groups after the first three rounds.

Carlos Ramirez

Saudis still supreme

GULF CUP

SAUDI ARABIA RETAINED the Gulf Cup in Kuwait, underlining their position as the region's leading side. Gerard Van der Lem's team finished a point ahead of surprise package Bahrain, winning four and drawing two of their six games in the round-robin event to lift the trophy they had previously claimed in 1994 and 2002.

Two goals from Yasser Al-Qahtani against Yemen in their final game guaranteed the Saudis victory after earlier wins over the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain.

However, the tournament was criticised for being too long as it ran for over two weeks. Qatar's French coach Philippe Troussier claimed the event was held more for the entertainment of the moneyed elite than for the good of the game.

Oman's Czech coach Milan Macala added: "There were hardly any goals and my feeling is everybody is afraid to speak up about the low standard. The competition was too long; it was like the World Cup."

The criticism has led to plans to make the next Gulf Cup, in Qatar, an eight-team event. It will feature Iraq, invited back after a 14-year absence due to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The teams are likely to be split into two groups of four, with the winners facing off in the Final.

As usual, there was a round of sackings after the tournament. Englishman Roy Hodgson was fired by the UAE after they finished only fifth. He was replaced by Frenchman Jean-Francois Jodar, who coached the nation's Under-20 team at the World Youth Cup. Milan Zivadinovic, formerly in charge of Iraq, was another to go, after tournament debutants Yemen finished bottom with only one point.

Michael Church

Three-time winners...Saudi Arabia's players and officials celebrate another Gulf Cup triumph

Japan face Iran clash

ASIAN CUP

HOLDERS JAPAN WILL face fellow powerhouses Iran in the group stage of this year's Asian Cup finals, to be held in China from July 17 to August 7. The pair's meeting will revive memories of Japan's epic 3-2 victory over the Iranians to qualify for the 1998 World Cup finals.

Japan, who also face Oman and Thailand during the group stage, will play all their first round games in the western city of Chongqing.

The top two teams from the four groups of four qualify for the quarter-finals in what is the largest ever Asian Cup.

In Group A, hosts China face Philippe Troussier's Qatar as well as Indonesia and the burgeoning talents of Bahrain.

World Cup semi-finalists South Korea meet Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan in Group B, while in Group C, Saudi Arabia, who have reached the Final of the last five tournaments, face Iraq and central Asians Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The latter, Oman and Bahrain have all qualified for the first time.

Michael Church

● *See World Service, starting page 75, for full finals match schedule.*

From the heart...Gral celebrates his winner

Gral walks after grabbing glory

JAPAN

JUBILO IWATA EARNED consolation for their narrow failure to win last year's Second Stage by defeating Cerezo Osaka 1-0 in the Emperor's Cup Final on New Year's Day. Brazilian forward Gral scored the 72nd-minute winner, 10 minutes before being sent off for a second bookable offence.

League champions Yokohama F Marinos made the running in the transfer market, signing South Korean World Cup striker Ahn Jung-hwan from Shimizu S-Pulse on a one-year deal, to partner Tatsuhiko Kubo in attack.

S-Pulse have also sold Japan midfielder Alex to Urawa Reds, where he is joined by defender Tulio from Mito Hollyhock. Both players were born in Brazil but are now naturalised.

Kashima Antlers have signed Brazil and former Roma striker Fabio Junior from Atletico Mineiro, Japan defender Yutaka Akita has joined Nagoya Grampus Eight, South Korea striker Choi Yong-soo has left JEF United Ichihara for Second Division Kyoto Purple Sanga, and FC Tokyo have signed Brazilian Olympic striker Lucas Severino from Rennes.

Jubilo have re-appointed Takashi Kuwahara as manager. He led the club to the J.League title in 1997 and 1999. S-Pulse's new manager is a Brazilian, Antonio, who previously led Kashiwa Reysol, in 1995. Oita Trinita have appointed Han Berger from Dutch side Utrecht as manager on a one-year contract.

Former Bosnia-Herzegovina coach Fuad Muzurovic has taken the reins at Cerezo Osaka after their original choice, Croat Petar Nadoveza, was forced to turn down the job because of a heart condition.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

ROUND-UP

ASIA

● CHINESE FA Cup holders Beijing Guoan beat League champions Shanghai Shenhua 4-3 to claim the Super Cup. Former Asian Player of the Year Fan Zhiyi has been named player/assistant coach at Zhuhai Zhongbang.

● Bruno Metsu has been given a new three-year contract after guiding UNITED ARAB EMIRATES side Al Ain to the Asian Champions League title.

● Turkish defender Alpay Ozalan has signed for SOUTH KOREA'S Incheon United, the K-League's newest team, after being released by Aston Villa in England. Kim Dae-eui, the 2002 Korean Player of the Year, has left champions Songnam Ilhwa to join Suwon Bluewings.

● In HONG KONG, Norway lifted the Carlsberg Cup for the second time, beating Honduras 3-1 in the Final. A Hong Kong Selection lost 3-0 to Sweden in the third-place play-off.

● Chilean Jorge Toledo of INDONESIA'S Persita Tangerang has had a four-year ban for fighting reduced to one year.

● Hungarian coach Laslo Kiss has taken charge of MALDIVES side Valencia for the second time.

● Regar of Tursun-Zade won the League in TAJIKISTAN.

● Nisa Ashkhabad were convincing champions in TURKMENISTAN, finishing 13 points clear of Nebitchi.

Michael Church, Azam Mahmood & Vladimir Kalinkovich

OCEANIA

● Adelaide United are making a determined bid to qualify for the AUSTRALIAN National Soccer League's six-team play-offs despite having been formed just before the current campaign got under way.

The club – in fifth place at the end of January – rose from the ashes of Adelaide City, who withdrew from the League shortly before the season started. The squad, which was almost entirely inherited from City, includes four ex-internationals – Aurelio Vidmar, Ross Aloisi, Goran Lozanovski and Carl Veart.

Paul Moon

United we stand...Veart (left)

AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICA

● CAMEROON'S Samuel Eto'o, Ivorian Didier Drogba and Nigeria's Jay-Jay Okocha are the three candidates for the delayed 2003 African Footballer of the Year award, to be announced in the Cameroon capital Yaounde on April 30. In the domestic Cup Final, League winners Cotonsport clinched the Double with a 2-1 win over Sable de Batie.

● GABON and EQUATORIAL GUINEA have asked to be allowed to make a late joint bid to host the 2008 African Nations Cup. The other bidders are Ghana, Libya and South Africa.

● Daring Club Motema Pembe forward Biscotte Mbala was named as the DR CONGO Player of the Year. His new club coach is Nair Nasreddine, a Belgian of Tunisian origin.

NORTH AFRICA

● TUNISIAN champions Esperance parted company with coach Youssef Zouaoui after once again failing to win the African Champions League. He is replaced by Argentinian Luis Oscar Fullone, recently in charge of Mamelodi Sundowns in South Africa. Esperance player Walid Azaiez has gone to Saudi Arabia.

● In MOROCCO, Kawkab Marrakesh fired coach Fakhreddine Rajhi after a run of poor form. Royal Armed Forces beat Wydad Casablanca 1-0 in the Throne Cup Final.

● ALGERIA'S JS Kabylie have signed two players from Cameroon champions Cotonsport – Willy Endzanga, a Congolese international, and Roberts Sesay, originally from Sierra Leone.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

● CAPS United and international keeper Energy Murambadoro was named as ZIMBABWE'S Footballer of the Year.

WEST AFRICA

● GHANA have appointed Portuguese Mariano Barreto as coach. Barreto previously worked as assistant to Artur Jorge in Russia.

● BURKINA FASO'S ASFA Yennenga fired Italian coach Guigliemo Arena, replacing him with Bamour Fall of Senegal, who had previously worked in Equatorial Guinea.

● GAMBIA fired coach Sang Ndong, a former national team goalkeeper, after the country were eliminated in the World Cup qualifiers by Liberia.

● Dragons l'Oueme won the championship in BENIN.

Mark Gleeson

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Julio Cesar BAPTISTA

Putting it about...Baptista (left) battles with Deportivo La Coruna's Manuel Pablo

Brazilian 'Beast' out to prove there is life after Reyes at Sevilla

THEY CALL HIM The Beast. And Sevilla's Brazilian summer 2003 signing Julio Cesar Baptista – a big, powerful man with a chest as broad as his smile – says he doesn't mind.

Indeed, when Spanish sports daily *AS* came to town he happily posed in a Sevilla shirt with a series of claw-like rips down the side and a roaring, supposedly fearsome expression.

It's all natural, too. The Beast insists he never even set foot in a gym until he arrived in Spain last summer from Sao Paulo. The 22-year-old, a childhood friend of Milan's Kaka, is the latest discovery of Sevilla's sporting director, Ramon Rodriguez Verdejo, 'Monchi'.

Monchi made a series of typically clever signings last close season, including bruising centre-back Aitor Ocio on a free from Athletic Bilbao, plus Uruguayan striker Dario Silva from Malaga and Spanish goalkeeper Esteban from Oviedo – both at a knockdown price of little over £1million. They were added to pacy, skilful Brazilian full-back Daniel Alves, picked up on loan last season (a deal that Sevilla recently made permanent for around £800,000). Daniel was voted the third best player at last year's Under-20 World Youth Cup, and no one doubted the ability or value of Ocio, Dario Silva or Esteban.

The Beast, meanwhile, appeared to be Monchi's biggest risk. Although he made his debut for Brazil at 19, under Emerson Leao, few knew much about him. And his £2m price-tag seemed a lot for a club of Sevilla's limited resources.

No one questions the move now, though. Baptista, Sevilla's biggest success, would cost three or four times as much.

And yet he has even surprised the sporting director, who claimed he had bought "the new Mauro Silva", a powerhouse defensive midfielder. Instead, coach Joaquin Caparros decided to employ him further upfield, just behind Dario Silva. "I had rarely played as a striker before, and I didn't like it because I had to play with my back to goal," said Baptista. "Now, behind the front man rather than as an out-and-out forward, I can see everything."

The results were almost instant. Despite missing five weeks because of a muscle injury, Baptista is rampaging through defences and his goal tally is well into double figures. He is, says Caparros, a "goldmine".

"I am surprised," the Brazilian admitted. "I've never scored this many goals in my career." Indeed, his previous season's best was a measly four.

Baptista's childhood hero was stylish midfielder Rai, but he acknowledges his bruising physique has most helped him settle in Europe. "I'm far bigger than most players in Brazil, but in Spain that's not so true. You could say I'm a Europeanised Brazilian. In Brazil, it's touch, touch, touch, while everything is quicker in Spain – and that suits me," he told *Don Balon* magazine.

"People work on the physical side of the game far more here. In Brazil, teams train more, twice a day, but it's much more about technique – using a tennis ball, for example. It's not all genetic, you know!"

In truth, Baptista looks a giant among men even in Spain, as he bulldozes his way through defences with insulting ease. And the big man is also a big cult hero in the red half of the city where he has been made to feel so at home. After all, Seville is the warmest, most flamboyant of Spanish cities – the closest Spain gets to Brazil, in culture, climate and cooking. "I felt comfortable here straight away," he said.

Yet Baptista, an only child who is learning English and says he would like to be an architect, still insists even the *sevillanos* don't cook like his mother Wilma, who has arrived in Seville to help to make his transition smoother.

So much so that when she returned home to Brazil for a fortnight, she left 15 days-worth of food in his freezer. The Beast has a voracious appetite.

Sid Lowe

FACT FILE

Club Sevilla (Spa)
Country Brazil
Born October 1, 1981, in Sao Paulo
Previous club Sao Paulo
International debut June 2001, v Japan
International caps 2 (0 goals)

Niko KRANJCAR

Teenage Dinamo Zagreb captain dreaming of switch to Barcelona

THE LINEAGE OF rising Croat star Niko Kranjcar always pointed to a life in football. After all, his father Zlatko was a professional of no little ability, featuring in midfield in the late 1970s and early 1980s for Yugoslavia, Dinamo Zagreb and Rapid Wien, and later successfully coaching Dinamo and NK Zagreb to Croat League titles.

Kranjcar senior, who almost became Croatian national coach following the resignation of Mirko Jozic after the last World Cup, may have achieved much in an exemplary career. But his son seems destined for even greater things.

Niko is already Dinamo's captain at the age of 19 – the youngest skipper in the club's history – and his brilliance as a creative midfielder has bewitched emissaries from many of Europe's leading sides. Rumours have the likes of Barcelona, Internazionale, Milan and Liverpool vying for his services.

Many in Croatia believe Barcelona are in pole position, however. One of his agents, former national team striker Davor Suker, was reported to have visited the Catalan capital for talks, and Kranjcar himself has expressed a desire to be a Barça man.

"I have plenty of time to make that move abroad," says Kranjcar, who thanks to his father's spell at Rapid Wien also has an Austrian passport, giving him EU eligibility. "I will not go just because the offer is good. I'm still dreaming of Barcelona. They are my big love."

Recently called up to the senior Croatia squad after a series of excellent displays for the Under-21s, Kranjcar has justifiably been compared to ex-national team midfield star Zvonimir Boban. Like the former Milan favourite, Kranjcar's game is based on technical grace, vision and imagination. It takes a special breed of teenager to skipper a team to a League title but Kranjcar did it effortlessly last season when Dinamo romped home.

Indeed, some might say that Kranjcar has the potential to reach even greater heights than Boban. The youngster arguably packs a more powerful shot and definitely has a more pronounced work ethic, showing a healthy appetite for tackling and energetically bestriding the attacking third of the field.

"Niko is a natural," says Ilija Loncarevic, the former Dinamo coach, who gave Kranjcar his first-team debut at 16. "Some thought I was crazy to pick someone so young. But I knew he had the maturity and technical ability to cope. You are talking about a young man with an exceptional football brain, one who is bound to be a key figure for Croatia for many years to come."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Dinamo Zagreb
Country Croatia
Born August 13, 1984, in Zagreb
Previous club ONS Hitrec Kacian
Honours Croat League 2003

Facundo QUIROGA

Argentina's new defensive solution with roots in Portugal

BEFORE ARGENTINA'S World Cup qualifier against Bolivia last November, a murmur went round the Buenos Aires crowd. Who on earth was this defender Facundo Quiroga? Their ignorance was not hard to understand. Quiroga is one of a growing breed of players who moved to Europe before making their name in their country of origin.

When he joined Sporting Lisbon in 1998 Quiroga had played just 22 matches in Argentina's First Division. The game against Bolivia was his first on home soil since then.

Argentina's new defender took the situation in his typically calm and measured stride. "Why should I be upset if people say I'm an unknown?" he asked. "They're right." He was not nearly so unknown 90 minutes later. Bolivia continually tried to test him, but he held firm, won his tackles and even helped break the deadlock, bursting forward to win a free-kick from which Andres D'Alessandro opened the scoring.

Former Argentina captain and defender Roberto Perfumo was impressed. He judged Quiroga "the best in the team, working hard to defend and push forward. Versatile and organised, he fills a gaping hole." Four days later Quiroga was singled out as Argentina's best player against Colombia, and it was generally agreed that one of the team's problem positions had now been filled.

Coach Marcelo Bielsa has long been fielding a back three, with Roberto Ayala at sweeper and Walter Samuel on the left. The right flank, though, has been a headache. Bielsa looked at Nestor Sensini, Mauricio Pochettino and Nelson Vivas, but none had been entirely convincing. After recovering from injury, Vivas regained the slot as the World Cup qualifiers got underway. But his sudden retirement opened the door, and having served his apprenticeship in Europe, Quiroga was ready.

There had been few opportunities for the young defender in his first spell at Sporting. A loan to Napoli got him back on track. "Playing in Italy was very important for my career," he recalls. "Coming up against top opponents every Sunday forces you to grow as a player and gain mental strength."

It was Sporting's gain when he returned to Portugal. Now a more experienced and authoritative defender, Quiroga has become a terrace favourite in the team pushing FC Porto for the Portuguese title.

His time also seems to have come at international level. He just missed the cut for the Argentinian squad that won the 1997 World Youth Cup, and for the 2002 World Cup. But in 2004 he has a real chance of finally becoming a household name back home.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Country Argentina
Born January 10, 1978, in San Luis
Previous clubs Newell's Old Boys, Sporting Lisbon (Por), Napoli (Ita)
International debut April 2002, v Germany
International caps 8 (0 goals)

Habib BAMOGO

French Under-21 striker following in Henry's footsteps

UNCANNY HOW THE early career of talented young French attacker Habib Bamogo has mirrored that of compatriot Thierry Henry. Both hail from the Parisian suburbs, both went to the French football academy at Clairefontaine before turning professional at a Cote d'Azur club – Henry with Monaco, Bamogo at Montpellier – and both successfully featured in the front line of the Under-21s.

Of course, the comparisons end there. But while Bamogo has much to learn, he is a fine prospect, scoring regularly in the French League this season and generating much interest from the likes of Lyon, Marseille and Paris Saint-Germain, plus a number of Premiership sides. True, Bamogo has just extended his contract with Montpellier to 2006. However, if his club are relegated in May or a half-decent offer is made for him, he will surely walk.

So what makes Bamogo such an attractive proposition? He is quick out of the blocks, dangerous when pulling out wide and works effectively back into midfield, impressing with his ability to find space and play crisp one-twos. Most significant of all, his finishing has improved out of all recognition. In his first season in the Montpellier first team (2001-02), the sight of goal unnerved him. But no longer.

"I wouldn't call myself a born goalscorer," says Bamogo, whose parents come from the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. "For a long time I played on the right side of midfield, and when the Montpellier coaching staff suggested I go up front a few years ago, I was not keen. I didn't feel like an attacker. But after getting used to my new role and scoring more and more goals, I realised I had what it takes."

With 14 France Under-21 appearances to his name – in which he scored five times – and the 'Ligue 1' spotlight increasingly being trained on him, Bamogo has good reason to think that the doors of the full France squad may open for him in the not-too-distant future.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club **Montpellier**
Country **France**
Born **May 8, 1982, in Paris**
Previous clubs **Chatenay-Malabry, Montrouge, INF Clairefontaine**

Emil GARGOROV

Bulgarian playmaker back on board in time for Euro 2004

STYLISH BULGARIAN MIDFIELDER Emil Gargorov no doubt feels that patience has its rewards. Almost three years after his first taste of international football in friendlies against Mexico and Jamaica in early 2001, he made it back into the squad and now looks set to be picked for Euro 2004.

The decision of Bulgaria coach Plamen Markov to give Gargorov a run out as substitute in the November friendly victory over South Korea in Seoul had a whiff of inevitability about it. Since joining CSKA Sofia from capital city rivals Lokomotiv in the summer of 2002, the youngster has made enormous strides and has also proved a worthy skipper of his country's Under-21s.

Often mentioned in the same breath as former national team creative midfielder Krassimir Balakov – who retired at the end of last season with 92 caps – Gargorov's ability has not been exaggerated. He has the same refinement on the ball and vision as 'Bala', is perfectly able to set the tempo of a game and has clearly mastered the art of set-piece delivery.

Goalscoring is another of his fortes, having perfected the late, undetected run into the box. Last season, he contributed 14 League goals as CSKA claimed the title.

The only real flaw in his game is a tendency to over-elaborate on occasion.

"Yes, football is very much a team game, but an individual of Gargorov's class can make a lot of difference," says CSKA coach Aleksander Stankov. "He is improving all the time. He deserves to play for Bulgaria, and it will take him to a higher level and make him even more influential."

As with all talented Bulgarian players, Gargorov's destiny lies in the West. Bordeaux and several Turkish and German clubs have been impressed, and given that the asking price is thought to be only £1.4million, they are not likely to be the only ones.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club **CSKA Sofia**
Country **Bulgaria**
Born **February 15, 1981, in Sofia**
Previous club **Lokomotiv Sofia**
International debut **January 2001, v Mexico**
International caps **3 (0 goals)**
Honours **Bulgarian League 2003 (CSKA)**

HOT STUFF FROM CHILE

Tim Vickery selects some of the brightest stars from the recent South American Olympic qualifying tournament

BY THE TIME South American players reach Under-23 football, many are experienced professionals, or have come up through the ranks with their national team – giving them ample opportunity to have been spotted before. More than 30 players who appeared in the Olympic qualifiers in Chile – including almost the entire Brazil team that were eliminated in such dramatic fashion – have appeared in previous Talent Scouts. This slot is for those who have not been featured before.

ARGENTINA

Osmar FERREYRA

Born 09.01.83. Club River Plate.

Has made a big impression in recent months, as a left-back for his club and as a wide midfielder in the World Youth Cup and now for the Under-23s. Has a great left foot, and his delivery from free-kicks is superb.

BOLIVIA

Juan Carlos ARCE

10.04.85. Oriente Petrolero.

The most interesting player Bolivia has produced for a while. Operates behind the striker, where despite a frail physique he takes responsibility for organising the attack, supplying pace and creating chances.

BRAZIL

GOMES

15.02.81. Cruzeiro.

Keeper not without his defects – especially a tendency to flap downwards at crosses. But he is tall and athletic, and came up big for Brazil in difficult moments. Had the best goals against record in the tournament, and could not be blamed for the shock elimination.

CHILE

Mark GONZALEZ

10.07.84. Universidad Catolica.

Left-sided midfielder with terrific acceleration and a left foot that has power and subtlety. Already seeing senior Chile team action.

CHILE

Jorge VALDIVIA

19.10.83. Colo Colo.

Delightful, twinkle-toed playmaker who despite a frail physique ran rings round both Brazil and Argentina. Finds clever angles for his passes, and his little flicks and dribbles take opponents out of the game.

COLOMBIA

Alvaro DOMINGUEZ

10.06.81. Deportivo Cali.

Captain of the side and looks close to making a senior national team breakthrough. Playmaker with an excellent range of passing. His movement is improving and he is gaining in confidence and physical strength.

COLOMBIA

Sergio HERRERA

15.03.81. America.

Has taken the roundabout route via knee problems and the Second Division, but now could be the answer to his country's prayers. No stylist, but scores genuine centre-forward's goals. Top scorer in the tournament despite Colombia's early exit.

ECUADOR

Franklin SALAS

30.08.81. LDU.

Small striker with superb control, a low centre of gravity and tight dribbling skills. Does his best work cutting in from the left. Had a terrific club season and has forced his way into the senior Ecuador squad.

PARAGUAY

Diego FIGUEREDO

28.04.82. Olimpia.

Tall central midfielder whose surging runs proved problematic for opponents. Works hard to win the ball and his height is useful in aerial battles. Paraguay's outstanding player in their shock qualification triumph.

VENEZUELA

Renier RODRIGUEZ

25.03.84. Caracas.

Well-built attacking left-back with pace, strength and a great left foot. Caught the eye in a losing side, and could be on his way to Colombian football.

Free-kick expert...Osmar Ferreyra

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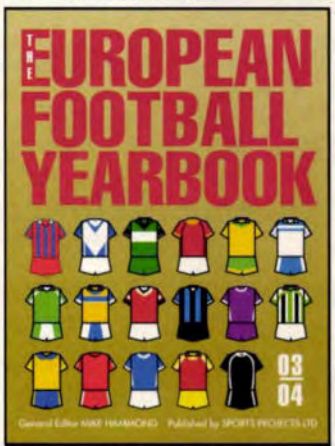

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Nothing to declare

It was all quiet on the transfer front for most of the 16 remaining teams in the UEFA Champions League

THE NEED TO rein in spending, coupled with a lack of players eligible to play in the knockout stages of this season's UEFA Champions League, meant the winter transfer market was one of the quietest on record. Of the 16 teams involved in the second round of Europe's top club competition, only England's Big Three – Arsenal, Manchester United and Chelsea – made major signings.

Crucially for **ARSENAL**, Jose Antonio Reyes, their record signing from Sevilla, is eligible to play in their Champions League match against Celta Vigo. Despite the emergence this season of youngsters from the club's own ranks such as David Bentley and Jeremie Aliadiere, Reyes is expected to play a significant role in Arsenal's European games. The Spaniard cost £10.5million, rising to £17.5m dependent on appearances. The outlay is an indication that Arsenal, despite being committed to spending on their new stadium, are confident of earning extra income by making further progress in Europe.

CELTA VIGO'S main signing, Sasa Ilic, is cup-tied, having played for Partizan Belgrade in the group stage. New coach Raddy Antic is no stranger to English football, but must cope without defender Juanfran (knee injury) and the departure on loan to Russia of striker Catanha. Chilean striker Maurizio Pinilla, signed from Italy's Chievo, is just 19, but may be called upon as a replacement.

CHELSEA were, inevitably, linked with numerous signings, but settled on just one: Scott Parker, from Charlton, for £10m. The newcomer will provide another option in a midfield missing the injured Juan Veron.

Chelsea's Champions League opponents, **STUTTGART**, have been boosted by striker Kevin Kuranyi signing a new contract and the purchase of Hakan Yakin, Marco Streller (both from Basle) and Boris Zivkovic (Portsmouth).

Louis Saha was **MANCHESTER UNITED'S** major signing after much wrangling with Fulham. He will provide much-needed striking support for Ruud Van Nistelrooy. United's other deals – Dong Fangzhou from China, sent out on loan to Royal Antwerp, and Liam Miller from Celtic – will not arrive until the summer.

FC PORTO welcomed back winger Sergio Conceicao, who is keen for action ahead of Euro 2004, but is ineligible for the Champions League, having played for Lazio earlier in the competition. Porto have tried to compensate for the loss of injured strikers Derlei and Cesar Peixoto by signing Maciel from Uniao Leiria, while midfielder Carlos Alberto has also arrived, from Fluminense.

The tie of the second round is undoubtedly **REAL MADRID** against **BAYERN MUNICH**. However, both squads have remained pretty much as they were before the transfer window opened. Madrid, despite their defensive frailties, have sent defender Ruben Gonzalez on loan to Borussia Monchengladbach. Bayern, meanwhile, have welcomed Sebastian Deisler back into training after his spell on the sidelines suffering depression.

Blue is the colour...Scott Parker gets his hands on a Chelsea shirt

SPARTA PRAGUE face perhaps the hardest task in the second round, against defending champions **MILAN**. A number of players left Sparta during the winter break, including striker Libor Sionko, sold to Austria's Grazer AK. The major arrival is Jiri Stajner, on loan from Hannover.

Milan were content to release Rivaldo from his contract. Their only signing was 17-year-old striker Nicola Pozzi, a prolific scorer for Cesena and Italy's youth teams.

JUVENTUS made no new signings in preparation for their tie with **DEPORTIVO LA CORUNA**. In fact, it was all departures, with Edgar Davids, Ruben Olivera and Salvatore Fresi sent on loan to Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and Perugia respectively. Juve could also be without defender Alessandro Birindelli until the end of March, because of a thigh strain.

Deportivo did not sign anyone either and have a concern over the fitness of Argentinian midfielder Aldo Duscher after he tore a thigh muscle.

LOKOMOTIV MOSCOW were one of the most active in the January transfer market, ahead of their games with **MONACO**. The Russians boosted their firepower with the signings of international striker Dmitri Sychev from Marseille and the return of James Obiorah. In addition, Lithuanian international Deividas Cesnauskis moved across town from Dinamo Moscow, and Lokomotiv also signed Georgian Under-21 Roman Akhalkatsi.

Monaco made no big-name signings; instead they were more concerned about the fitness of inspirational captain Ludovic Giuly, a doubt with a broken foot.

The remaining two teams, **LYON** and **REAL SOCIEDAD**, were also quiet on the transfer front, though Lyon may live to regret their inactivity. Brazilian striker Giovane Elber may miss the games against Sociedad after injuring his hamstring.

Sociedad sent midfielder Mikel Alonso on loan to Second Division Numancia and made no signings.

Gavin Hamilton

TRANSFERS DECEMBER 2003-JANUARY 2004

PLAYER	POS	FROM	TO
Milenko ACIMOVIC	M	Tottenham (Eng)	Lille (Fra) (loan)
Clarence ACUNA	M	Newcastle (Eng)	Rosario Central (Arg)
Eric ADDO	D	Roda JC (Hol)	PSV (Hol)
ADRIANO	F	Parma (Ita)	Internazionale (Ita)
Kodjo AFANOU	D	Al Ain (UAE)	Bordeaux (Fra)
Alex AGUINAGA	M	Cruz Azul (Mex)	LDU Quito (Ecu)
AHN Jung-hwan	F	Shimizu S-Pulse (Jap)	Yokohama F Marinos (Jap)
Lawrence AIDOO	F	Monchengladbach (Ger)	Nurnberg (Ger) (loan)
Roman AKHALKATSI	M	Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo)	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
Yutaka AKITA	D	Kashima Antlers (Jap)	Nagoya Grampus Eight (Jap)
ALEX	M	Shimizu S-Pulse (Jap)	Urawa Reds (Jap)
Mauro ALMEIDA	F	FC Porto (Por)	Zwolle (Hol)
ALPAY Ozalan	D	free agent	Incheon United (SKo)
Guido ALVARENGA	M	Olimpia (Par)	Libertad (Par)
Cristian ALVAREZ	D	Lanus (Arg)	Racing Santander (Spa)
Ioannis AMANATIDIS	F	Stuttgart (Ger)	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
Marco AMELIA	G	Lecce (Ita)	Parma (Ita)
Yannis ANASTASIOU	F	Roda JC (Hol)	Ajax (Hol)
ANDERSON Thiago	F	Uniao Sao Joao (Bra)	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
Patrik ANDERSSON	D	Barcelona (Spa)	Malmo (Swe)
Martin ANDRESEN	M	Stabaek (Nor)	Blackburn (Eng) (loan)
Sergio ARAGONESES	G	Getafe (Spa)	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
Arni Gautur ARASON	G	Rosenborg (Nor)	Manchester City (Eng)
Francisco ARCE	D	Gamba Osaka (Jap)	Libertad (Par)
Gabor BABOS	G	NAC Breda (Hol)	Feyenoord (Hol)
Dino BAGGIO	M	Lazio (Ita)	Ancona (Ita) (loan)
Kennedy BAKIRCIOGLOU	M	Hammarby (Swe)	Irakliis (Gre)
Bosko BALABAN	F	free agent	Club Brugge (Blg)
Edgar BARRETO	M	Cerro Porteno (Par)	NEC Nijmegen (Hol)
Fabien BARTHEZ	G	Manchester Utd (Eng)	Marseille (Fra) (loan)
Laurent BATLLES	M	Bastia (Fra)	Marseille (Fra)
Gerardo BEDOYA	M	free agent	Colon Santa Fe (Arg)
Martin BENGTSSON	M	Orebro (Swe)	Internazionale (Ita)
Felix BENITO	D	Independiente (Arg)	Perugia (Ita)
Fredrik BERGLUND	F	Roda JC (Hol)	Esbjerg (Den)
Eyal BERKOVIC	M	Manchester City (Eng)	Portsmouth (Eng)
Jonathan BLONDEL	M	Tottenham (Eng)	Club Brugge (Blg)
Carlos BOCANEGRA	D	Chicago Fire (USA)	Fulham (Eng)
Danny BOFFIN	M	St Truiden (Blg)	Standard Liege (Blg)
Jorge BOLANO	M	Parma (Ita)	Lecce (Ita)
Roberto BONANO	G	Barcelona (Spa)	Murcia (Spa) (loan)
BONFIM	D	Juventude (Bra)	Lille (Fra)
Daniel BORIMIROV	M	1860 Munich (Ger)	Levski Sofia (Bul)
Michael BRIDGES	F	Leeds (Eng)	Newcastle (Eng) (loan)
Michael BROWN	M	Sheffield United (Eng)	Tottenham (Eng)
Cristian BUCCHI	F	Cagliari (Ita)	Ancona (Ita)
Vladmir BUT	M	Freiburg (Ger)	Hannover (Ger)
Ricardo CABANAS	M	Guingamp (Fra)	Grasshopper (Swi)
Gary CALDWELL	D	Newcastle (Eng)	Hibernian (Sco) (loan)
Souleymane CAMARA	M	Monaco (Fra)	Guingamp (Fra) (loan)
Jorge CAMPOS	M	Univ Catolica (Chl)	Quilmes (Arg)
Peter CANERO	M	Kilmarnock (Sco)	Leicester (Eng)
Ruben CAPRIA	M	Barcelona (Ecu)	Univ Catolica (Chl)
Roberto CARDINALE	D	Salernitana (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)
CARLOS ALBERTO	M	Fluminense (Bra)	FC Porto (Por)
Jorge CASANOVA	M	Bella Vista (Uru)	Chacarita Juniors (Arg)
Paolo CASTELLINI	D	Torino (Ita)	Brescia (Ita) (loan)
Cristian CASTILLO	F	Independiente (Arg)	Gimnasia LP (Arg)
Jairo CASTILLO	F	America (Col)	Independiente (Arg) (loan)
CATANHA	F	Celta Vigo (Spa)	Kryliya Sovetov (Rus) (loan)
Jorge CERVERA	F	Banfield (Arg)	Gallos Blancos (Mex)
CESAR	D	Fluminense (Bra)	Chievo (Ita)
Fabian CESARO	M	Penarol (Uru)	Atletico Rafaela (Arg)
Deividas CESNAUSKIS	M	Dinamo Moscow (Rus)	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
CHOI Yong-soo	F	JEF United (Jap)	Kyoto Purple Sanga (Jap)
Alejandro CICHERO	D	Central Espanol (Uru)	Nacional (Uru)
Gert CLAESSENS	M	Vitesse Arnhem (Hol)	Genk (Blg)

PLAYER	POS	FROM	TO
Francesco COLONNESE	D	Lazio (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)
Carl CORT	F	Newcastle (Eng)	Wolves (Eng)
Stephen CRAINEY	D	Celtic (Sco)	Southampton (Eng)
John CURTIS	D	Leicester (Eng)	Portsmouth (Eng)
Nikos DABIZAS	D	Newcastle (Eng)	Leicester (Eng)
DANI Garcia	F	Barcelona (Spa)	Zaragoza (Spa)
DANIEL Alves	D	Bahia (Bra)	Sevilla (Spa)
Edgar DAVIDS	M	Juventus (Ita)	Barcelona (Spa) (loan)
Frank DE BOER	D	Galatasaray (Tur)	Rangers (Sco)
Dennis DE NOOIJER	F	NEC Nijmegen (Hol)	Sparta Rotterdam (Hol)
Marcelo DE SOUZA	M	Penarol (Uru)	Velez Sarsfield (Arg)
Jermain DEFOE	F	West Ham (Eng)	Tottenham (Eng)
Daniele DEGANO	F	Ancona (Ita)	Parma (Ita)
Philippe DELAYE	M	Rennes (Fra)	Bastia (Fra)
Javier DELGADO	D	Colon Santa Fe (Arg)	Saturn (Rus)
Andrija DELIBASIC	F	Partizan Belgrade (Ser)	Mallorca (Spa)
Lassina DIABATE	D	Portsmouth (Eng)	Ajaccio (Fra)
Almo DIANA	D	Parma (Ita)	Sampdoria (Ita)
Nicolae DICA	F	Arges Pitesti (Rom)	Steaua Bucharest (Rom)
Alejandro DOMINGUEZ	F	River Plate (Arg)	Torpedo-Metallurg (Rus)
DONG Fangzhou	F	Dalian Shide (Chn)	Manchester United (Eng)
DONG Fangzhou	F	Manchester United (Eng)	Royal Antwerp (Blg) (loan)
EDMUNDO	F	free agent	Fluminense (Bra)
Isah ELIAKWU	F	Internazionale (Ita)	Parma (Ita) (loan)
Peter ENCKELMAN	G	Aston Villa (Eng)	Blackburn (Eng)
Jonathan FABBRO	M	Boca Juniors (Arg)	Once Caldas (Col) (loan)
FABIO JUNIOR	F	Atletico Mineiro (Bra)	Kashima Antlers (Jap)
Juan Roman FERNANDEZ	D	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)	River Plate (Arg)
Demetrius FERREIRA	D	Bastia (Fra)	Marseille (Fra)
Diego FIGUEREDO	M	Olimpia (Par)	Valladolid (Spa)
Eusebio FRANCESCO	M	Ancona (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)
Salvatore FRESI	D	Juventus (Ita)	Perugia (Ita) (loan)
Steffen FREUND	M	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	Leicester (Eng)
Fabricio FUENTES	D	Gallos Blancos (Mex)	Velez Sarsfield (Arg) (loan)
Carlos GALVAN	D	Lanus (Arg)	Murcia (Spa) (loan)
Pipa GANCEDO	M	Osasuna (Spa)	Murcia (Spa)
Ioan GANEA	F	Bursaspor (Tur)	Wolves (Eng)
Sebastian GARCIA	F	Tacuarembo (Uru)	Independiente (Arg)
Finidi GEORGE	M	free agent	Mallorca (Spa)
Billy GIBSON	D	Rangers (Sco)	Partick (Sco) (loan)
Corrado GRABBI	F	Blackburn (Eng)	Ancona (Ita)
Peter GRAULUND	F	Bochum (Ger)	Helsingborgs (Swe)
Michael GRAY	D	Sunderland (Eng)	Blackburn (Eng)
Ariel GRAZIANI	F	Barcelona (Ecu)	Lanus (Arg)
Bjarni GUDJONSSON	M	Bochum (Ger)	Coventry (Eng)
Steve GUPPY	M	Celtic (Sco)	Leicester (Eng)
Mustapha HADJI	M	Aston Villa (Eng)	Espanyol (Spa) (loan)
Magnus HEDMAN	G	Celtic (Sco)	Ancona (Ita) (loan)
Ingo HERTZSCH	D	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
Andreas HERZOG	M	free agent	Los Angeles Galaxy (USA)
HILTON	D	Servette (Swi)	Bastia (Fra) (loan)
Steve HOWEY	D	Leicester (Eng)	Bolton (Eng)
Dario HUBNER	F	Ancona (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)
Ivan HURTADO	D	Barcelona (Ecu)	Murcia (Spa) (loan)
Dario HUSAIN	F	River Plate (Arg)	Univ Catolica (Chl)
Victor IKPEBA	F	free agent	Charleroi (Blg)
Sasa ILIC	M	Partizan Belgrade (Ser)	Celta Vigo (Spa)
Lars JACOBSEN	D	Hamburg (Ger)	FC Copenhagen (Den)
JAIME Sanchez	M	Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)	Hannover (Ger) (loan)
David JAMES	G	West Ham (Eng)	Manchester City (Eng)
Mario JARDEL	F	Bolton (Eng)	Ancona (Ita) (loan)
Collins JOHN	F	Twente (Hol)	Fulham (Eng)
Jermain JONES	F	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
Paul JONES	G	Southampton (Eng)	Wolves (Eng)
JUNIOR	D	Parma (Ita)	Siena (Ita) (loan)
Andrei KANCHELSKIS	M	free agent	Dinamo Moscow (Rus)
Giorgios KARAGOUNIS	M	Internazionale (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)

PLAYER	POS	FROM	TO
Daniel KENEDY	M	Maritimo (Por)	Sporting Braga (Por)
Vyacheslav KERNOZENKO	G	Arsenal Kyiv (Ukr)	Dnipro (Ukr)
Marek KINCL	F	Sparta Prague (Cze)	Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)
Mark KINSELLA	M	Aston Villa (Eng)	West Brom (Eng)
Antonin KINSKY	G	Slovan Liberec (Cze)	Saturn (Rus)
Martin KLEIN	D	Sparta Prague (Cze)	Teplice (Cze)
Sebastien KNEISSEL	F	Chelsea (Eng)	Dundee (Sco)
Vaclav KOLOUSEK	M	Slovan Liberec (Cze)	Slavia Prague (Cze)
Sergei KORNILENKO	F	Dinamo Minsk (Bls)	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)
Pavel KRMAS	M	Sparta Prague (Cze)	Teplice (Cze)
Nenad LALATOVIC	D	Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)	Wolfsburg (Ger)
Denny LANDZAAT	M	Willem II (Hol)	AZ Alkmaar (Hol)
Christian LEDESMA	M	Hamburg (Ger)	Colon Santa Fe (Arg) (loan)
David LILLEY	D	Partick (Sco)	Kilmarnock (Sco)
Daniel LJUBOJA	F	Strasbourg (Fra)	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) (loan)
Hernan LOPEZ	F	Olimpia (Par)	Toluca (Mex)
LUCIANO	M	Internazionale (Ita)	Chievo (Ita)
Lomana LUA LUA	F	Newcastle (Eng)	Portsmouth (Eng) (loan)
Vitaliy LYSYTSKYI	M	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)	Dnipro (Ukr) (loan)
Rafael MACERATESI	F	Colon Santa Fe (Arg)	Estudiantes LP (Arg)
MACIEL	F	Uniao Leiria (Por)	FC Porto (Por)
Kim MADSEN	D	Wolfsburg (Ger)	Hansa Rostock (Ger)
Frederico MAGALLANES	F	free agent	Sevilla (Spa) (loan)
Stephen MAKINWA	F	Como (Ita)	Modena (Ita)
Massimo MARAZZINA	F	Chievo (Ita)	Modena (Ita)
MARCELINHO CARIOCA	M	Al Nassr (Sau)	Vasco da Gama (Bra)
Tomislav MARIC	F	Wolfsburg (Ger)	Monchengladbach (Ger) (loan)
Carlos MARINELLI	M	Middlesbrough (Eng)	Boca Juniors (Arg)
Georgi MARKOV	D	Lokomotiv Sofia (Bul)	Levski Sofia (Bul)
Lee MARTIN	D	Wimbledon (Eng)	Manchester United (Eng)
Clint MATHIS	F	MetroStars (USA)	Hannover (Ger)
Brian McBRIDE	F	Columbus Crew (USA)	Fulham (Eng)
Andy MELVILLE	D	Fulham (Eng)	West Ham (Eng)
MIKEL ALONSO	M	Real Sociedad (Spa)	Numancia (Spa) (loan)
Diego MILITO	F	Racing Club (Arg)	Genoa (Ita)
Danny MILOSEVIC	G	Leeds (Eng)	Celtic (Sco) (loan)
Igor MITRESKI	D	Sampdoria (Ita)	Portsmouth (Eng)
Viorel MOLDOVAN	F	Al Wadha (UAE)	Nantes (Fra)
Ivica MORNAR	F	Anderlecht (Blg)	Portsmouth (Eng)
Lee MORRIS	F	Derby (Eng)	Leicester (Eng)
Jose Maria MOVILLA	M	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	Zaragoza (Spa) (loan)
Dorinel MUNTEANU	M	Wolfsburg (Ger)	Steaua Bucharest (Rom)
Hidetoshi NAKATA	M	Parma (Ita)	Bologna (Ita) (loan)
Fernando NAVARRO	D	Barcelona (Spa)	Albacete (Spa)
Carlos NAVARRO MENTOYA	G	Chacarita Juniors (Arg)	Independiente (Arg)
NECATI Ates	F	Adanaspor (Tur)	Galatasaray (Tur)
Jiri NEMEC	M	Sparta Prague (Cze)	Viktoria Zizkov (Cze)
Nicolas NICOLAY	F	Villa Espanola (Uru)	Atletico Rafaela (Arg)
Andrzej NIEDZIELAN	F	Groclin Grodzisk (Pol)	NEC Nijmegen (Hol)
Jari NIEMI	F	Tampere United (Fin)	Mons (Blg)
Kiril NIKOLOV	M	Litex Lovech (Bul)	Sporting Braga (Por)
Arturo NORAMBUENA	D	Univ Catolica (Chl)	Quilmes (Arg)
James OBIORAH	F	Cadiz (Spa)	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
Bartholomew OGBECHE	F	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)	Bastia (Fra)
OKAN Buruk	M	Internazionale (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)
Ruben OLIVERA	M	Juventus (Ita)	Atletico Madrid (Spa) (loan)
Sebastian OLSZAR	F	Admira Wacker (Aut)	Portsmouth (Eng)
Victor ONOPKO	D	Spartak-Alaniya (Rus)	Saturn (Rus)
Jon OTSEMOBOR	D	Liverpool (Eng)	Bolton (Eng) (loan)
Tarek OULIDA	M	Consadole Sapporo (Jap)	Den Haag (Hol)
Scott PARKER	M	Charlton (Eng)	Chelsea (Eng)
Petri PASANEN	D	Ajax (Hol)	Portsmouth (Eng) (loan)
Ian PEARCE	D	West Ham (Eng)	Fulham (Eng)
Guillermo PEREYRA	M	River Plate (Arg)	Mallorca (Spa)
Bobby PETTA	M	Celtic (Sco)	Fulham (Eng) (loan)
Maurizio PINILLA	F	Chievo (Ita)	Celta Vigo (Spa)
Javier PINOLA	D	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	Racing Club (Arg)
Mauricio POCHETTINO	D	Bordeaux (Fra)	Espanyol (Spa) (loan)
Nicola POZZI	F	Cesena (Ita)	Milan (Ita)
Claudiu RADUCANU	F	Steaua Bucharest (Rom)	Espanyol (Spa)
Gavin RAE	M	Dundee (Sco)	Rangers (Sco)
Fabrizio RAVANELLI	F	free agent	Perugia (Ita)
Guiseppe REINA	F	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)	Hertha Berlin (Ger)
Jose Antonio REYES	F	Sevilla (Spa)	Arsenal (Eng)
Jan REZEK	F	Teplice (Cze)	Sparta Prague (Cze)
RICARDINHO	F	Sao Paulo (Bra)	Middlesbrough (Eng)
Freddy RINCON	M	free agent	Corinthians (Bra)
RIVALDO	M	Milan (Ita)	Cruzeiro (Bra) (loan)
Bruno RODRIGUEZ	F	Lens (Fra)	Metz (Fra) (loan)
ROQUE JUNIOR	D	Milan (Ita)	Siena (Ita) (loan)
RUBEN Gonzalez	D	Real Madrid (Spa)	Monchengladbach (Ger) (loan)
Petter RUDI	M	Austria Wien (Aut)	Molde (Nor)
Louis SAHA	F	Fulham (Eng)	Manchester United (Eng)
Stoiko SAKALIEV	F	Naftex Bourgas (Bul)	CSKA Sofia (Bul)
Mario SALGADO	F	Brescia (Fra)	Salzburg (Aut)
Luigi SARTOR	D	Roma (Ita)	Ancona (Ita)
Nisa SAVELJIC	D	Bastia (Fra)	Guingamp (Fra)
Giuseppe SCULLI	F	Chievo (Ita)	Perugia (Ita)
SERGIO CONCEICAO	M	Lazio (Ita)	FC Porto (Por) (loan)
Lucas SEVERINO	F	Rennes (Fra)	FC Tokyo (Jap)
Vicenzo SICIGNANO	G	Parma (Ita)	Lecce (Ita)
Michael SILVERBAUER	M	AaB Aalborg (Den)	FC Copenhagen (Den)
Libor SIONKO	F	Sparta Prague (Cze)	Grazer AK (Aut)
Paul SMITH	G	Brentford (Eng)	Southampton (Eng)
Nolberto SOLANO	M	Newcastle (Eng)	Aston Villa (Eng)
David SOMMEIL	D	Manchester City (Eng)	Marseille (Fra) (loan)
Antony SPINOSA	D	Standard Liege (Blg)	Willem II (Hol)
Jiri STAJNER	F	Hannover (Ger)	Sparta Prague (Cze)
Dejan STANKOVIC	M	Lazio (Ita)	Internazionale (Ita)
Jonathan STEAD	F	Huddersfield (Eng)	Blackburn (Eng)
Flavius STOICAN	D	Dinamo Bucharest (Rom)	Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)
Marco STRELLER	F	Basle (Swi)	Stuttgart (Ger)
Andrea SUSSI	D	Ancona (Ita)	Bologna (Ita)
Dmitri SYCHEV	F	Marseille (Fra)	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
Toni TAPALOVIC	G	Bochum (Ger)	Uerdingen (Ger)
Stathis TAVLARIDIS	D	Arsenal (Eng)	Lille (Fra) (loan)
Ricardo TAVARELLI	G	Olimpia (Par)	Gremio (Bra)
Martin TAYLOR	D	Blackburn (Eng)	Birmingham (Eng)
Zach THORNTON	G	Chicago Fire (USA)	Benfica (Por)
TINGA	F	Gremio (Bra)	Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Kazuyuki TODA	M	Tottenham (Eng)	Den Haag (Hol) (loan)
Stig TOFTING	M	Tianjin Teda (Chn)	AGF Aarhus (Den)
Yaya TOURE	D	Beveren (Blg)	Metalurh Donetsk (Ukr)
TULIO	D	Mito Hollyhock (Jap)	Urawa Reds (Jap)
Claudio UBEDA	D	Racing Club (Arg)	Tokyo Verdy (Jap)
Carlos VALDERRAMA	M	free agent	Union Magdalena (Col)
Daniel VAN BUYTEN	D	Marseille (Fra)	Manchester City (Eng)
Marco VAN HOOGDALEM	M	Schalke (Ger)	Roda JC (Hol) (loan)
Maris VERPAKOVSKIS	F	Skonto Riga (Lat)	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)
VICTOR	F	Germinal Beerschot (Blg)	Club Brugge (Blg)
Gregory VIGNAL	D	Liverpool (Eng)	Espanyol (Spa) (loan)
Stanislav VLCEK	F	Sigma Olomouc (Cze)	Dinamo Moscow (Rus)
Petr VORISEK	M	Teplice (Cze)	Sparta Prague (Cze)
Loukas VYDRA	D	Paniliakos (Gre)	Panathinaikos (Gre)
Erik WAHLSTADT	F	Esbjerg (Den)	Helsingborgs (Swe)
WAMBERTO	F	Ajax (Hol)	Mons (Blg)
Brian WEST	M	Columbus Crew (USA)	Fredrikstad (Nor)
Samuel WOWOAH	F	Djurgardens (Swe)	Stabaek (Nor) (loan)
Hakan YAKIN	F	Basle (Swi)	Stuttgart (Ger)
Marcelo ZALAYETA	F	Juventus (Ita)	Perugia (Ita) (loan)
Martin ZBONCAK	M	Sparta Prague (Cze)	Dinamo Moscow (Rus)
Zdravko ZDRAVKOV	G	Istanbulspor (Tur)	Litex Lovech (Bul)
Ianis ZICU	M	Internazionale (Ita)	Parma (Ita) (loan)
Boris ZIVKOVIC	D	Portsmouth (Eng)	Stuttgart (Ger)

INTERNATIONALS

Thursday, January 1

Jan 1 - Hamilton - friendly
Bermuda 0
Barbados 4 (Parris 6, Riley 51, Goodridge 74, 76)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Raynor (Ber)
Bermuda: Adams - Thomas (Steede 71), Hunt (Alexander 61), Jennings, Dill, Wade, Coddington (Ming 58), Boyles (Manders 63), Nusum, Smith (Peniston 79), Bean Jr (Smith 33). *Sent off: Wade 28min.*
Barbados: Chase - Sobers, Parris (Neblett 39), Cox, R Burrowes, Grosvenor, K Hall, Lovell (W Burrowes 80), N Forde, Goodridge, Riley.

Thursday, January 8

Jan 8 - friendly
Cuba 0
Martinique 0

Jan 8 - Port Said - friendly
Egypt 5 (Belal 16, Abdelhamid 26, Al-Tabei 39, A Hassan 59, 68)
Rwanda 1 (Makasi 87)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 10,000
Egypt: N El-Sayed - A Hassan, Al-Tabei, El-Quabbani (El-Nahhas), El-Desouki (Fahim), T El-Sayed, Emam (T Said), Abdelhamid, Khashaba, Ali (Fathi), Belal.

Jan 10 - Paramaribo - friendly
Surinam 1
Dutch Antilles 1
HT: 0-1

Sunday, January 11

Jan 11 - Bridgetown - friendly
Barbados 2 (N Forde 35, Riley 58)
Grenada 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Small (Bar)
Barbados: Howell (Boxill 48) - Sobers, Parris, Cox, R Burrowes, S Hall (Neblett 80), K Hall (Straker 65), N Forde, Lovell (W Burrowes 74), Goodridge, Riley (Lucas 85).
Grenada: K Baptiste - Phillip, P Modeste, F Baptiste, Benjamin, James, Andrew (Thomas 62), Augustine (Henry 46), Morris, Bishop (Folkes 62), Rennie.

Wednesday, January 14

Jan 14 - Port Said - friendly
Egypt 2 (Belal 40, 53)
DR Congo 2 (Dinzey 52, Mbala 70)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000
Egypt: A El-Sayed - A Hassan (Fathi), Al-Tabei, El-Quabbani, El-Desouki (El-Saqqa), T El-Sayed, Barakat, H Said (Abdelhamid), Emam (T Said), Ali (Khashaba), Belal.

Jan 14 - Djerba - friendly
Tunisia 2 (Jaziri 31, Hagui 43)
Benin 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 6,000
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Ayari (Clayton), Yahia, Badra, Hagui (Said), Ghodhbane (Bouazizi), Mnari, Chedli, Benachour (Jedidi), Braham, Jaziri (Mhadhebi).

Thursday, January 15

Jan 15 - Algiers - friendly
Algeria 0
Mali 2 (D Traore 4, B Toure 57)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Zehmoun (Tun)
Algeria: Mezair - Raho, Haddou, Beloufa (Zafour 46), Yahia (Aribi 69), Mamouni (Kraouche 46), Hadjadj, Ouadah (Achiou 62), Akrour (Cherrad 71), Belmadi (Ziani 69), Boutabout.
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - Diamoutene, F Diawara, Thiam, David Coulibaly (Abouta 81), D Sidibe, S Coulibaly, S Keita, B Toure, Kanoute (Mamady Sidibe 75), D Traore (Demba 46).

Saturday, January 17

Jan 17 - Willemstad - friendly
Dutch Antilles 2 (Silberie, Christina)
Surinam 0

Jan 17 - Port Said - friendly
Egypt 1 (Belal 53)
Burkina Faso 1 (Dagano 35)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,000
Egypt: N El-Sayed - A Hassan (Fathi), Al-Tabei, Khashaba (Abdelhamid), El-Saqqa, T Said, Barakat (T El-Sayed), H Said, Emam (Ghali), Hossam, Belal.

Jan 17 - Dakar - friendly
Senegal 2 (P M Diop 29, Mabizela og 83)
South Africa 1 (Nomvete 15)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** El Achiri (Mor)
Senegal: Sylva - Coly (Beye 82), P M Diop, Diawara, Daf, Diao (Sylvain N'Diaye 82), P B Diop (A Cisse 66), H Camara, Niang (Kamara 66), Diouf, Ndoye (Mendy 82).
South Africa: Arendse - Molefe, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Lekgetho, Buckley (Fredericks 83), Mhlongo, Moshoeu (Mnguni 66), Nomvete (Pule 76), Mayo, Zuma.

Jan 17 - Sfax - friendly
Tunisia 2 (Santos 9, Saidi 90)
Benin 1 (Ahoueya 60)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000
Tunisia: Boumnijel (Fadhel) - Clayton, Jaidi, Saidi, Hagui (Mnari), Jedidi (Ghodhbane), Chedli (Benachour), Nafti, Bouazizi, Santos (Mhadhebi), Jaziri (Braham).

Sunday, January 18

Jan 18 - St Michael - friendly
Barbados 0
Canada 1 (Corrazin 10)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Forde (Bar)
Barbados: Howell - Sobers, Parris, Straker, R Burrowes, Neblett, Cox, K Hall, N Forde, Goodridge, Riley.
Canada: Sutton - Pizzolitto (Braz 42), Pozniak, Gervais, Watson, Dasovic, Bernier (Frondimadis 90), Sulentic (Kapos 75), Corrazin (Friend 62), Nash (Simpson 55), De Rosario.

Jan 18 - Carson - friendly
United States 1 (Donovan pen 76)
Denmark* 1 (Larsen pen 28)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,461. **Ref:** Rodriguez Moreno (Mex)
United States: Walker - Albright (Hejduk 79), Pope, Garcia, Convey, Ralston (Klein 62), Mulrooney (Zavagnin 71), Armas (Wolyniec 88), Beasley, Razov (Wolff 62), Donovan.
Denmark: Skov-Jensen - Vinzents, Per Nielsen, Albrechtsen (Svensson 58), Sennels, Retov (Stokholm 46), Wieghorst (Rasmussen 74), Bisgaard (Kristiansen 79), Silberbauer (Conteh 64), Larsen, Bechmann (Berg 58). *Sent off: Stokholm 84min.*
**Domestic League XI*

Monday, January 19

Jan 19 - Tripoli - friendly
Libya 2
Kenya 0

Tuesday, January 20

Jan 20 - Sainte-Maxime, France - friendly
Guinea 1 (A T Camara 72)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 0-0

Tuesday, January 27

Jan 27 - Shanghai - friendly
China 0
Macedonia 0

Wednesday, January 28

Jan 28 - Road Town - friendly
British Virgin Islands 0
Dominica 1 (Cuffy)
HT: 0-1

Jan 28 - Willemstad - friendly
Dutch Antilles 6
Aruba 1

Jan 28 - San Salvador - friendly
El Salvador 1
Panama 1
HT: 1-1

Jan 28 - Singapore - friendly
Singapore 2 (Bennett 45, Ishak 52)
Norway 5 (Stadheim 18, Aas 42, H Flo 59, 70, Brattbakk 67)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Supian (Mly)
Singapore: Lewis - Ridhuan (Manzur 46), Khaizan, Iskander, Subramani (Zainal 72), Bennett, Latiff, Ali (Tan Kim-leng 68), Ishak (Salleh 76), Shah (Casmir 46), Sahdan (Juraimi 65).
Norway: Holtan (Skjeldestad 46) - Aas (Dahl 46), Riseth (Hangeland 68), Berntsen, Hanstveit, Kah, Solli, Gashi (Sorensen 46), Stadheim (Brattbakk 46), Hoseth, H Flo (Braaten 81).

Thursday, January 29

Jan 29 - Shanghai - friendly
China 1
Macedonia 0
HT: 0-0

Saturday, January 31

Jan 31 - friendly
Antigua & Barbuda 1
St Kitts & Nevis 0

Jan 31 - St George's - friendly
Grenada 0
Barbados 1
HT: 0-0

Jan 31 - West Palm Beach, USA - friendly
Haiti 1
Nicaragua 1
HT: 0-1

Tuesday, February 3

Feb 3 - Guangzhou - friendly
China 2 (Zhang Yuning 42, Hao Haidong 53)
Finland 1 (Eremenko 51)
HT: 1-0
Finland: Kaven - Nylund, Salli, Kuivasto, Hietanen (Heinanen 83), Pohja (Makela 75), Koppinen, Ilola (Okkonen 86), Kopteff, Eremenko (Sjolund 57), Sumiala (Kottila 57).

2006 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

AFRICA

5 finals berths

Group 1

05.06.04 .....Senegal-Congo
05.06.04 .....Zambia-Togo
06.06.04 .....Liberia-Mali
19.06.04 .....Mali-Zambia
20.06.04 .....Congo-Liberia
20.06.04 .....Togo-Senegal
03.07.04 .....Senegal-Zambia
04.07.04 .....Congo-Mali
04.07.04 .....Liberia-Togo
04.09.04 .....Mali-Senegal
04.09.04 .....Zambia-Liberia
05.09.04 .....Togo-Congo
10.10.04 .....Congo-Zambia
10.10.04 .....Liberia-Senegal
10.10.04 .....Togo-Mali
26.03.05 .....Mali-Togo
26.03.05 .....Senegal-Liberia
26.03.05 .....Zambia-Congo
04.06.05 .....Mali-Liberia
05.06.05 .....Congo-Senegal
05.06.05 .....Togo-Zambia
18.06.05 .....Senegal-Togo
18.06.05 .....Zambia-Mali
19.06.05 .....Liberia-Congo
03.09.05 .....Zambia-Senegal
04.09.05 .....Mali-Congo
04.09.05 .....Togo-Liberia
08.10.05 .....Senegal-Mali
09.10.05 .....Congo-Togo
09.10.05 .....Liberia-Zambia

Group 2

05.06.04 .....Burkina Faso-Ghana
05.06.04 .....South Africa-Cape Verde Islands
05.06.04 .....Uganda-DR Congo
20.06.04 .....Cape Verde Islands-Uganda
20.06.04 .....DR Congo-Burkina Faso
20.06.04 .....Ghana-South Africa
03.07.04 .....South Africa-Burkina Faso
03.07.04 .....Uganda-Ghana
04.07.04 .....Cape Verde Islands-DR Congo
04.09.04 .....Burkina Faso-Uganda
05.09.04 .....DR Congo-South Africa
05.09.04 .....Ghana-Cape Verde Islands
09.10.04 .....Uganda-South Africa
10.10.04 .....Cape Verde Islands-Burkina Faso
10.10.04 .....Ghana-DR Congo
26.03.05 .....Burkina Faso-Cape Verde Islands
26.03.05 .....South Africa-Uganda
27.03.05 .....DR Congo-Ghana
05.06.05 .....Cape Verde Islands-South Africa
05.06.05 .....DR Congo-Uganda
05.06.05 .....Ghana-Burkina Faso
18.06.05 .....Burkina Faso-DR Congo
18.06.05 .....South Africa-Ghana
18.06.05 .....Uganda-Cape Verde Islands
03.09.05 .....Burkina Faso-South Africa
04.09.05 .....DR Congo-Cape Verde Islands
04.09.05 .....Ghana-Uganda
08.10.05 .....South Africa-DR Congo
08.10.05 .....Uganda-Burkina Faso
09.10.05 .....Cape Verde Islands-Ghana

Group 3

06.06.04 .....Cameroon-Benin
06.06.04 .....Ivory Coast-Libya
06.06.04 .....Sudan-Egypt
18.06.04 .....Libya-Cameroon
18.06.04 .....Egypt-Ivory Coast
20.06.04 .....Benin-Sudan
04.07.04 .....Benin-Egypt
04.07.04 .....Cameroon-Ivory Coast
04.07.04 .....Sudan-Libya
03.09.04 .....Egypt-Cameroon
03.09.04 .....Libya-Benin
05.09.04 .....Ivory Coast-Sudan
08.10.04 .....Libya-Egypt
10.10.04 .....Benin-Ivory Coast
10.10.04 .....Sudan-Cameroon
25.03.05 .....Egypt-Libya
27.03.05 .....Cameroon-Sudan
27.03.05 .....Ivory Coast-Benin
03.06.05 .....Egypt-Sudan
03.06.05 .....Libya-Ivory Coast
05.06.05 .....Benin-Cameroon
19.06.05 .....Cameroon-Libya
19.06.05 .....Ivory Coast-Egypt
19.06.05 .....Sudan-Benin
02.09.05 .....Egypt-Benin
02.09.05 .....Libya-Sudan
04.09.05 .....Ivory Coast-Cameroon
09.10.05 .....Benin-Libya
09.10.05 .....Cameroon-Egypt
09.10.05 .....Sudan-Ivory Coast

Group 4

04.06.04 .....Algeria-Angola
05.06.04 .....Gabon-Zimbabwe
05.06.04 .....Nigeria-Rwanda
20.06.04 .....Angola-Nigeria
20.06.04 .....Rwanda-Gabon
20.06.04 .....Zimbabwe-Algeria
03.07.04 .....Gabon-Angola
03.07.04 .....Nigeria-Algeria
04.07.04 .....Rwanda-Zimbabwe
03.09.04 .....Algeria-Gabon
05.09.04 .....Angola-Rwanda
05.09.04 .....Zimbabwe-Nigeria
09.10.04 .....Gabon-Nigeria
10.10.04 .....Angola-Zimbabwe
10.10.04 .....Rwanda-Algeria
25.03.05 .....Algeria-Rwanda
26.03.05 .....Nigeria-Gabon
27.03.05 .....Zimbabwe-Angola
05.06.05 .....Angola-Algeria
05.06.05 .....Rwanda-Nigeria
05.06.05 .....Zimbabwe-Gabon
17.06.05 .....Algeria-Zimbabwe
18.06.05 .....Gabon-Rwanda
18.06.05 .....Nigeria-Angola
02.09.05 .....Algeria-Nigeria
04.09.05 .....Angola-Gabon
04.09.05 .....Zimbabwe-Rwanda
08.10.05 .....Gabon-Algeria
08.10.05 .....Nigeria-Zimbabwe
09.10.05 .....Rwanda-Angola

Group 5

05.06.04 .....Kenya-Guinea
05.06.04 .....Malawi-Morocco
05.06.04 .....Tunisia-Botswana

19.06.04 .....Morocco-Kenya
20.06.04 .....Botswana-Malawi
20.06.04 .....Guinea-Tunisia
03.07.04 .....Malawi-Guinea
03.07.04 .....Tunisia-Kenya
04.07.04 .....Botswana-Morocco
04.09.04 .....Kenya-Malawi
04.09.04 .....Morocco-Tunisia
05.09.04 .....Guinea-Botswana
09.10.04 .....Malawi-Tunisia
10.10.04 .....Botswana-Kenya
10.10.04 .....Guinea-Morocco
26.03.05 .....Kenya-Botswana
26.03.05 .....Morocco-Guinea
26.03.05 .....Tunisia-Malawi
04.06.05 .....Morocco-Malawi
05.06.05 .....Botswana-Tunisia
05.06.05 .....Guinea-Kenya
18.06.05 .....Kenya-Morocco
18.06.05 .....Malawi-Botswana
18.06.05 .....Tunisia-Guinea
03.09.05 .....Kenya-Tunisia
03.09.05 .....Morocco-Botswana
04.09.05 .....Guinea-Malawi
08.10.05 .....Malawi-Kenya
08.10.05 .....Tunisia-Morocco
09.10.05 .....Botswana-Guinea

Group winners qualify for finals

ASIA

4.5 finals berths

1st stage

Group 1

18.02.04 .....Iran-Qatar
18.02.04 .....Jordan-Laos
31.03.04 .....Jordan-Qatar
31.03.04 .....Laos-Iran
09.06.04 .....Iran-Jordan
09.06.04 .....Qatar-Laos
08.09.04 .....Jordan-Iran
08.09.04 .....Laos-Qatar
13.10.04 .....Laos-Jordan
13.10.04 .....Qatar-Iran
17.11.04 .....Iran-Laos
17.11.04 .....Qatar-Jordan

Group 2

18.02.04 .....Palestine-Taiwan
18.02.04 .....Uzbekistan-Iraq
31.03.04 .....Palestine-Iraq
31.03.04 .....Taiwan-Uzbekistan
09.06.04 .....Iraq-Taiwan
09.06.04 .....Uzbekistan-Palestine
08.09.04 .....Palestine-Uzbekistan
08.09.04 .....Taiwan-Iraq
13.10.04 .....Iraq-Uzbekistan
13.10.04 .....Taiwan-Palestine
17.11.04 .....Iraq-Palestine
17.11.04 .....Uzbekistan-Taiwan

Group 3

18.02.04 .....India-Singapore
18.02.04 .....Japan-Oman
31.03.04 .....India-Oman
31.03.04 .....Singapore-Japan
09.06.04 .....Japan-India
09.06.04 .....Oman-Singapore
08.09.04 .....India-Japan
08.09.04 .....Singapore-Oman
13.10.04 .....Oman-Japan
13.10.04 .....Singapore-India
17.11.04 .....Japan-Singapore
17.11.04 .....Oman-India

Group 4

18.02.04 .....China-Kuwait
18.02.04 .....Malaysia-Hong Kong
31.03.04 .....Hong Kong-China
31.03.04 .....Malaysia-Kuwait
09.06.04 .....China-Malaysia
09.06.04 .....Kuwait-Hong Kong
08.09.04 .....Hong Kong-Kuwait
08.09.04 .....Malaysia-China
13.10.04 .....Hong Kong-Malaysia
13.10.04 .....Kuwait-China
17.11.04 .....China-Hong Kong
17.11.04 .....Kuwait-Malaysia

Group 5

18.02.04 .....UAE-Thailand
18.02.04 .....Yemen-North Korea
31.03.04 .....North Korea-UAE
31.03.04 .....Yemen-Thailand
09.06.04 .....Thailand-North Korea
09.06.04 .....UAE-Yemen
08.09.04 .....North Korea-Thailand
08.09.04 .....Yemen-UAE
13.10.04 .....North Korea-Yemen
13.10.04 .....Thailand-UAE
17.11.04 .....Thailand-Yemen
17.11.04 .....UAE-North Korea

Group 6

18.02.04 .....Bahrain-Syria
18.02.04 .....Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan
31.03.04 .....Kyrgyzstan-Syria
31.03.04 .....Tajikistan-Bahrain
09.06.04 .....Bahrain-Kyrgyzstan
09.06.04 .....Syria-Tajikistan
08.09.04 .....Kyrgyzstan-Bahrain
08.09.04 .....Tajikistan-Syria
13.10.04 .....Syria-Bahrain
13.10.04 .....Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan
17.11.04 .....Bahrain-Tajikistan
17.11.04 .....Syria-Kyrgyzstan

Group 7

18.02.04 .....South Korea-Lebanon
18.02.04 .....Vietnam-Maldives
31.03.04 .....Maldives-South Korea
31.03.04 .....Vietnam-Lebanon
09.06.04 .....Lebanon-Maldives
09.06.04 .....South Korea-Vietnam
08.09.04 .....Maldives-Lebanon
08.09.04 .....Vietnam-South Korea
13.10.04 .....Lebanon-South Korea
13.10.04 .....Maldives-Vietnam
17.11.04 .....Lebanon-Vietnam
17.11.04 .....South Korea-Maldives

Group 8

18.02.04 .....Saudi Arabia-Indonesia
18.02.04 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka
31.03.04 .....Sri Lanka-Saudi Arabia
31.03.04 .....Turkmenistan-Indonesia
09.06.04 .....Indonesia-Sri Lanka
09.06.04 .....Saudi Arabia-Turkmenistan
08.09.04 .....Sri Lanka-Indonesia
08.09.04 .....Turkmenistan-Saudi Arabia
13.10.04 .....Indonesia-Saudi Arabia
13.10.04 .....Sri Lanka-Turkmenistan
17.11.04 .....Indonesia-Turkmenistan
17.11.04 .....Saudi Arabia-Sri Lanka

Group winners advance to 2nd stage

2nd stage

The eight qualifiers are divided into two groups of four. The winners and runners-up of these groups qualify for finals. The two third-placed sides meet in a two-leg play-off, the winner of which meets the fourth-placed CONCACAF team in a play-off for a place in finals

CONCACAF

3.5 finals berths

1st stage

Group 1

Game 1
18.02.04 .....Grenada-Guyana
14.03.04 .....Guyana-Grenada
Game 2
12.06.04 .....United States-Winners Game 1
19.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-United States

Group 2

Game 1
29.02.04 .....Bermuda-Montserrat
21.03.04 .....Montserrat-Bermuda
Game 2
12.06.04 .....El Salvador-Winners Game 1
19.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-El Salvador

Group 3

Game 1
18.02.04 .....Haiti-Turks & Caicos Is
21.02.04 .....Turks & Caicos Is-Haiti
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Jamaica
19.06.04 .....Jamaica-Winners Game 1

Group 4

Game 1
22.02.04 .....British Virgin Is-St Lucia
28.03.04 .....St Lucia-British Virgin Is
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Panama-Winners Game 1
19.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Panama

Group 5

Game 1
22.02.04 .....Cayman Islands-Cuba
27.03.04 .....Cuba-Cayman Islands
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Costa Rica
19.06.04 .....Costa Rica-Winners Game 1

Group 6

Game 1
28.02.04 .....Aruba-Surinam
27.03.04 .....Surinam-Aruba
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Guatemala
19.06.04 .....Guatemala-Winners Game 1

Group 7

Game 1
18.02.04 .....Antigua & Barbuda-Dutch Antilles
31.03.04 .....Dutch Antilles-Antigua & Barbuda
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Honduras
19.06.04 .....Honduras-Winners Game 1

Group 8

12.06.04 .....Canada-Belize
19.06.04 .....Belize-Canada

Group 9

Game 1
26.03.04 .....Dominica-Bahamas
28.03.04 .....Bahamas-Dominica
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Mexico-Winners Game 1
19.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Mexico

Group 10

Game 1
18.02.04 .....US Virgin Is-St Kitts & Nevis
31.03.04 .....St Kitts & Nevis-US Virgin Is
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Barbados-Winners Game 1
19.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Barbados

Group 11

Game 1
19.03.04 .....Dominican Republic-Anguilla
21.03.04 .....Anguilla-Dominican Republic
Game 2
12.06.04 .....Winners Game 1-Trinidad & Tobago
19.06.04 .....Trinidad & Tobago-Winners Game 1

Group 12

12.06.04 .....Nicaragua-St Vincent & Grenadines
19.06.04 .....St Vincent & Grenadines-Nicaragua

Game 2/group winners advance to 2nd stage

2nd stage

Group 1

Winners of 1st stage groups 1, 2, 3 4

Group 2

Winners of 1st stage groups 5, 6, 7, 8

Group 3

Winners of 1st stage groups 9, 10, 11, 12

Top two from each group advance to 3rd stage

3rd stage

The six qualifiers play in a single group, the top three from which qualify for finals. The fourth-placed team meet the winners of the Asian play-off in a play-off for a place in finals

EUROPE

14 finals berths (including hosts Germany, who qualify automatically)

Group 1

18.08.04 .....Macedonia-Armenia
18.08.04 .....Romania-Finland
04.09.04 .....Finland-Andorra
04.09.04 .....Holland-Czech Republic
04.09.04 .....Romania-Macedonia
08.09.04 .....Andorra-Romania
08.09.04 .....Armenia-Finland
09.10.04 .....Czech Republic-Romania
09.10.04 .....Finland-Armenia
09.10.04 .....Macedonia-Holland
13.10.04 .....Andorra-Macedonia
13.10.04 .....Armenia-Czech Republic
13.10.04 .....Holland-Finland
17.11.04 .....Andorra-Holland
17.11.04 .....Armenia-Romania
17.11.04 .....Macedonia-Czech Republic
09.02.05 .....Macedonia-Andorra
26.03.05 .....Armenia-Andorra
26.03.05 .....Czech Republic-Finland
26.03.05 .....Romania-Holland
30.03.05 .....Andorra-Czech Republic
30.03.05 .....Holland-Armenia
30.03.05 .....Macedonia-Romania
04.06.05 .....Armenia-Macedonia
04.06.05 .....Czech Republic-Andorra
04.06.05 .....Holland-Romania
08.06.05 .....Czech Republic-Macedonia
08.06.05 .....Finland-Holland
08.06.05 .....Romania-Armenia
17.08.05 .....Macedonia-Finland
17.08.05 .....Romania-Andorra
03.09.05 .....Andorra-Finland
03.09.05 .....Armenia-Holland
03.09.05 .....Romania-Czech Republic
07.09.05 .....Czech Republic-Armenia
07.09.05 .....Finland-Macedonia
07.09.05 .....Holland-Andorra
08.10.05 .....Czech Republic-Holland
08.10.05 .....Finland-Romania
12.10.05 .....Andorra-Armenia
12.10.05 .....Finland-Czech Republic
12.10.05 .....Holland-Macedonia

Group 2

Turkey
Denmark
Greece
Ukraine
Georgia
Albania
Kazakhstan

Fixtures tba

Group 3

18.08.04 .....Liechtenstein-Estonia
18.08.04 .....Slovakia-Luxembourg
04.09.04 .....Estonia-Luxembourg
04.09.04 .....Latvia-Portugal
04.09.04 .....Russia-Slovakia
08.09.04 .....Luxembourg-Latvia
08.09.04 .....Portugal-Estonia
08.09.04 .....Slovakia-Liechtenstein
09.10.04 .....Liechtenstein-Portugal
09.10.04 .....Luxembourg-Russia
09.10.04 .....Slovakia-Latvia
13.10.04 .....Latvia-Estonia
13.10.04 .....Luxembourg-Liechtenstein
13.10.04 .....Portugal-Russia
17.11.04 .....Liechtenstein-Latvia
17.11.04 .....Luxembourg-Portugal
17.11.04 .....Russia-Estonia

26.03.05 .....Estonia-Slovakia
26.03.05 .....Liechtenstein-Russia
30.03.05 .....Estonia-Russia
30.03.05 .....Latvia-Luxembourg
30.03.05 .....Slovakia-Portugal
04.06.05 .....Estonia-Liechtenstein
04.06.05 .....Portugal-Slovakia
04.06.05 .....Russia-Latvia
08.06.05 .....Estonia-Portugal
08.06.05 .....Latvia-Liechtenstein
08.06.05 .....Luxembourg-Slovakia
17.08.05 .....Latvia-Russia
17.08.05 .....Liechtenstein-Slovakia
03.09.05 .....Estonia-Latvia
03.09.05 .....Portugal-Luxembourg
03.09.05 .....Russia-Liechtenstein
07.09.05 .....Latvia-Slovakia
07.09.05 .....Liechtenstein-Luxembourg
07.09.05 .....Russia-Portugal
08.10.05 .....Portugal-Liechtenstein
08.10.05 .....Russia-Luxembourg
08.10.05 .....Slovakia-Estonia
12.10.05 .....Luxembourg-Estonia
12.10.05 .....Portugal-Latvia
12.10.05 .....Slovakia-Russia

Group 4

04.09.04 .....France-Israel
04.09.04 .....Rep Ireland-Cyprus
04.09.04 .....Switzerland-Faroe Islands
08.09.04 .....Faroe Islands-France
08.09.04 .....Israel-Cyprus
08.09.04 .....Switzerland-Rep Ireland
09.10.04 .....Cyprus-Faroe Islands
09.10.04 .....France-Rep Ireland
09.10.04 .....Israel-Switzerland
13.10.04 .....Cyprus-France
13.10.04 .....Rep Ireland-Faroe Islands
17.11.04 .....Cyprus-Israel
26.03.05 .....Israel-Rep Ireland
26.03.05 .....France-Switzerland
30.03.05 .....Israel-France
30.03.05 .....Switzerland-Cyprus
04.06.05 .....Faroe Islands-Switzerland
04.06.05 .....Rep Ireland-Israel
08.06.05 .....Faroe Islands-Rep Ireland
17.08.05 .....Faroe Islands-Cyprus
03.09.05 .....France-Faroe Islands
03.09.05 .....Switzerland-Israel
07.09.05 .....Cyprus-Switzerland
07.09.05 .....Faroe Islands-Israel
07.09.05 .....Rep Ireland-France
08.10.05 .....Cyprus-Rep Ireland
08.10.05 .....Switzerland-France
08.10.05 .....Israel-Faroe Islands
12.10.05 .....France-Cyprus
12.10.05 .....Rep Ireland-Switzerland

Group 5

04.09.04 .....Italy-Norway
04.09.04 .....Slovenia-Moldova
08.09.04 .....Moldova-Italy
08.09.04 .....Norway-Belarus
08.09.04 .....Scotland-Slovenia
09.10.04 .....Belarus-Moldova
09.10.04 .....Scotland-Norway
09.10.04 .....Slovenia-Italy
13.10.04 .....Italy-Belarus
13.10.04 .....Moldova-Scotland
13.10.04 .....Norway-Slovenia
26.03.05 .....Italy-Scotland
30.03.05 .....Moldova-Norway
30.03.05 .....Slovenia-Belarus
04.06.05 .....Belarus-Slovenia
04.06.05 .....Norway-Italy
04.06.05 .....Scotland-Moldova
08.06.05 .....Belarus-Scotland
03.09.05 .....Moldova-Belarus
03.09.05 .....Scotland-Italy
03.09.05 .....Slovenia-Norway
07.09.05 .....Belarus-Italy
07.09.05 .....Moldova-Slovenia
07.09.05 .....Norway-Scotland
08.10.05 .....Italy-Slovenia
08.10.05 .....Norway-Moldova
08.10.05 .....Scotland-Belarus
12.10.05 .....Belarus-Norway
12.10.05 .....Italy-Moldova
12.10.05 .....Slovenia-Scotland

Group 6

04.09.04 .....Austria-England
04.09.04 .....Azerbaijan-Wales
04.09.04 .....Northern Ireland-Poland
08.09.04 .....Austria-Azerbaijan
08.09.04 .....Poland-England
08.09.04 .....Wales-Northern Ireland
09.10.04 .....Austria-Poland
09.10.04 .....Azerbaijan-Northern Ireland
09.10.04 .....England-Wales
13.10.04 .....Azerbaijan-England
13.10.04 .....Northern Ireland-Austria
13.10.04 .....Wales-Poland
26.03.05 .....England-Northern Ireland
26.03.05 .....Poland-Azerbaijan
26.03.05 .....Wales-Austria
30.03.05 .....Austria-Wales
30.03.05 .....England-Azerbaijan
30.03.05 .....Poland-Northern Ireland
04.06.05 .....Azerbaijan-Poland
03.09.05 .....Northern Ireland-Azerbaijan
03.09.05 .....Poland-Austria
03.09.05 .....Wales-England
07.09.05 .....Azerbaijan-Austria
07.09.05 .....Northern Ireland-England
07.09.05 .....Poland-Wales
08.10.05 .....England-Austria
08.10.05 .....Northern Ireland-Wales
12.10.05 .....Austria-Northern Ireland
12.10.05 .....England-Poland
12.10.05 .....Wales-Azerbaijan

Group 7

04.09.04 .....Belgium-Lithuania
04.09.04 .....San Marino-Serbia & Montenegro
08.09.04 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Spain
08.09.04 .....Lithuania-San Marino
09.10.04 .....Bosnia-Herz.-Serbia & Montenegro
09.10.04 .....Spain-Belgium
13.10.04 .....Lithuania-Spain
13.10.04 .....Serbia & Montenegro-San Marino
17.11.04 .....Belgium-Serbia & Montenegro
17.11.04 .....San Marino-Lithuania
09.02.05 .....Spain-San Marino
26.03.05 .....Belgium-Bosnia-Herzegovina
30.03.05 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Lithuania
30.03.05 .....San Marino-Belgium
30.03.05 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Spain
04.06.05 .....San Marino-Bosnia-Herzegovina
04.06.05 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Belgium
04.06.05 .....Spain-Lithuania
08.06.05 .....Spain-Bosnia-Herzegovina
03.09.05 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Belgium
03.09.05 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Lithuania
07.09.05 .....Belgium-San Marino
07.09.05 .....Lithuania-Bosnia-Herzegovina
07.09.05 .....Spain-Serbia & Montenegro
08.10.05 .....Belgium-Spain
08.10.05 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-San Marino
08.10.05 .....Lithuania-Serbia & Montenegro
12.10.05 .....Lithuania-Belgium
12.10.05 .....San Marino-Spain
12.10.05 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Bosnia-Herz.

Group 8

04.09.04 .....Croatia-Hungary
04.09.04 .....Iceland-Bulgaria
04.09.04 .....Malta-Sweden
08.09.04 .....Hungary-Iceland
08.09.04 .....Sweden-Croatia
09.10.04 .....Croatia-Bulgaria
09.10.04 .....Malta-Iceland
09.10.04 .....Sweden-Hungary
13.10.04 .....Bulgaria-Malta
13.10.04 .....Iceland-Sweden
17.11.04 .....Malta-Hungary
26.03.05 .....Bulgaria-Sweden
26.03.05 .....Croatia-Iceland
30.03.05 .....Croatia-Malta
30.03.05 .....Hungary-Bulgaria
04.06.05 .....Bulgaria-Croatia
04.06.05 .....Iceland-Hungary
04.06.05 .....Sweden-Malta
08.06.05 .....Iceland-Malta
03.09.05 .....Hungary-Malta
03.09.05 .....Iceland-Croatia
03.09.05 .....Sweden-Bulgaria
07.09.05 .....Bulgaria-Iceland
07.09.05 .....Hungary-Sweden
07.09.05 .....Malta-Croatia
08.10.05 .....Bulgaria-Hungary
08.10.05 .....Croatia-Sweden
12.10.05 .....Hungary-Croatia
12.10.05 .....Malta-Bulgaria
12.10.05 .....Sweden-Iceland

Group winners and the two best runners-up qualify for finals. The other six runners-up are paired in three two-leg play-off matches, the winners of which also qualify for finals*
**Group runners-up will be ranked according to their results against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in their respective groups*

OCEANIA

0.5 finals berths

1st stage

Group 1

Tahiti
Solomon Islands
New Caledonia
Tonga
Cook Islands

Group 2

Fiji
Vanuatu
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
American Samoa

Fixtures tba

Top two from each group advance to 2nd stage
Byes to 2nd stage: Australia, New Zealand

2nd stage

The six qualifiers play in a single group. The group winners and runners-up advance to 3rd stage

3rd stage

The two qualifiers meet in a two-leg play-off, the winners of which meet the fifth-placed South American team in a play-off for a place in finals

SOUTH AMERICA

4.5 finals berths

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paraguay	4	3	0	1	8	6	9
Argentina	4	2	2	0	9	3	8
Brazil	4	2	2	0	7	5	8
Uruguay	4	2	1	1	11	8	7
Venezuela	4	2	0	2	3	6	6
Peru	4	1	2	1	6	4	5
Ecuador	4	1	1	2	3	3	4
Chile	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Bolivia	4	1	0	3	5	10	3
Colombia	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

06.09.03 .....Argentina-Chile 2-2
06.09.03 .....Ecuador-Venezuela 2-0
06.09.03 .....Peru-Paraguay 4-1
07.09.03 .....Colombia-Brazil 1-2
07.09.03 .....Uruguay-Bolivia 5-0
09.09.03 .....Chile-Peru 2-1
09.09.03 .....Venezuela-Argentina 0-3
10.09.03 .....Bolivia-Colombia 4-0
10.09.03 .....Brazil-Ecuador 1-0
10.09.03 .....Paraguay-Uruguay 4-1
15.11.03 .....Argentina-Bolivia 3-0
15.11.03 .....Colombia-Venezuela 0-1
15.11.03 .....Paraguay-Ecuador 2-1
15.11.03 .....Uruguay-Chile 2-1
16.11.03 .....Peru-Brazil 1-1
18.11.03 .....Chile-Paraguay 0-1
18.11.03 .....Venezuela-Bolivia 2-1
19.11.03 .....Brazil-Uruguay 3-3
19.11.03 .....Colombia-Argentina 1-1
19.11.03 .....Ecuador-Peru 0-0
30/31.03.04 .....Argentina-Ecuador
30/31.03.04 .....Bolivia-Chile
30/31.03.04 .....Paraguay-Brazil
30/31.03.04 .....Peru-Colombia
30/31.03.04 .....Uruguay-Venezuela
01/02.06.04 .....Bolivia-Paraguay
01/02.06.04 .....Brazil-Argentina
01/02.06.04 .....Ecuador-Colombia
01/02.06.04 .....Uruguay-Peru
01/02.06.04 .....Venezuela-Chile
04/05.06.04 .....Argentina-Paraguay
04/05.06.04 .....Chile-Brazil
04/05.06.04 .....Colombia-Uruguay
04/05.06.04 .....Ecuador-Bolivia
04/05.06.04 .....Peru-Venezuela
04/05.09.04 .....Brazil-Bolivia
04/05.09.04 .....Chile-Colombia
04/05.09.04 .....Paraguay-Venezuela
04/05.09.04 .....Peru-Argentina
04/05.09.04 .....Uruguay-Ecuador
09/10.10.04 .....Argentina-Uruguay
09/10.10.04 .....Bolivia-Peru
09/10.10.04 .....Colombia-Paraguay
09/10.10.04 .....Ecuador-Chile
09/10.10.04 .....Venezuela-Brazil
12/13.10.04 .....Bolivia-Uruguay
12/13.10.04 .....Brazil-Colombia
12/13.10.04 .....Chile-Argentina
12/13.10.04 .....Paraguay-Peru
12/13.10.04 .....Venezuela-Ecuador
16/17.11.04 .....Argentina-Venezuela
16/17.11.04 .....Colombia-Bolivia
16/17.11.04 .....Ecuador-Brazil
16/17.11.04 .....Peru-Chile
16/17.11.04 .....Uruguay-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 .....Bolivia-Argentina
26/27.03.05 .....Brazil-Peru
26/27.03.05 .....Chile-Uruguay
26/27.03.05 .....Ecuador-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 .....Venezuela-Colombia
29/30.03.05 .....Argentina-Colombia
29/30.03.05 .....Bolivia-Venezuela
29/30.03.05 .....Paraguay-Chile
29/30.03.05 .....Peru-Ecuador
29/30.03.05 .....Uruguay-Brazil
04/05.06.05 .....Brazil-Paraguay
04/05.06.05 .....Chile-Bolivia
04/05.06.05 .....Colombia-Peru
04/05.06.05 .....Ecuador-Argentina
04/05.06.05 .....Venezuela-Uruguay
07/08.06.05 .....Argentina-Brazil
07/08.06.05 .....Chile-Venezuela
07/08.06.05 .....Colombia-Ecuador
07/08.06.05 .....Paraguay-Bolivia
07/08.06.05 .....Peru-Uruguay
03/04.09.05 .....Bolivia-Ecuador
03/04.09.05 .....Brazil-Chile
03/04.09.05 .....Paraguay-Argentina
03/04.09.05 .....Uruguay-Colombia
03/04.09.05 .....Venezuela-Peru
08/09.10.05 .....Argentina-Peru
08/09.10.05 .....Bolivia-Brazil
08/09.10.05 .....Colombia-Chile
08/09.10.05 .....Ecuador-Uruguay
08/09.10.05 .....Venezuela-Paraguay
11/12.10.05 .....Brazil-Venezuela
11/12.10.05 .....Chile-Ecuador
11/12.10.05 .....Paraguay-Colombia
11/12.10.05 .....Peru-Bolivia
11/12.10.05 .....Uruguay-Argentina

Top four in section qualify for finals; fifth-placed side enter a play-off against Oceania section winners for a place in finals

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

In Tunisia

Group A

Jan 24 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 2 (Jaziri 26, Santos 56)
Rwanda 1 (Elias 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Evehe Divine (Cam)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Hagui, Ayari, Jaidi, Badra, Mnari (H Trabelsi 86), Nafti, Chedli (Bouazizi 66), Benachour, Santos, Jaziri (Jedidi 81). *Sent off: Benachour 60min.*
Rwanda: Nkunzingoma - Ndikumana, Bizimana, Bizagwira, Ntaganda, Sibomana, Elias, Nshimiyimana, Makasi (Lomani 69), Mbonabucya (Gatete 69), Karekezi. *Sent off: Sibomana 56min.*

Jan 25 - El Menzah, Tunis
DR Congo 1 (Masudi 30)
Guinea 2 (A T Camara 68, Feindouno 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Aboubacar (IvC)
DR Congo: Tokala - Muzinga, Mubiala, Kamudimba, Dinzey (Ndiwa 85), Luntala, Ilunga, Masudi, Mpiana (Kalulika 73), Lua Lua, Mbayo (Kabamba 76).
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Conte, Morlaye Soumah, Feindouno, Sow, Youla, O Camara, A T Camara (S Bangoura 68), Mansare.

Jan 28 - Bizerte
Guinea 1 (A T Camara 48)
Rwanda 1 (K Kamanzi 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Conte, Morlaye Soumah, Feindouno, Sow (Kader Camara 78), O Camara, Youla (S Bangoura 86), A T Camara, Mansare.
Rwanda: Nkunzingoma - Ndikumana, Bizagwira, Ntaganda, Bitana, M Kamanzi, Nshimiyimana, Elias, Karekezi (Mbonabucya 64), Gatete (Makasi 46), Lomani (K Kamanzi 74).

Jan 28 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 3 (Santos 54, 87, Braham 65)
DR Congo 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Badra, Hagui, Saidi, Ayari, Nafti (H Trabelsi 46), Mnari, Ghodhbane, Braham, Jedidi (Santos 17), Mhadhebi (Bouazizi 76).
DR Congo: Lukata - Ilunga, Muzinga, Mubiala, Kamudimba, Dinzey (Matingou 45), Luntala, Masudi (Nzuzi 67), Mbayo (Ngoy 58), Kalulika, Lua Lua. *Sent off: Lua Lua 38min.*

Feb 1 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 1 (Benachour 58)
Guinea 1 (A T Camara 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)
Tunisia: Azaiez - H Trabelsi (Ayari 46), Saidi, Jaidi, Yahia, Bouazizi, Chedli, Benachour, Jaziri (Hagui 90), Mhadhebi (Mnari 67), Santos.
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Conte, K Sylla, Feindouno (Youla 80), Sow, Abdoulkarim Sylla (Mansare 63), O Camara, S Bangoura, A T Camara (Drame 89).

Feb 1 - Bizerte
DR Congo 0
Rwanda 1 (Makasi 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 700. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mwamba, Muzinga, Mubiala (Kamudimba 61), Kisombe, Ilunga, Matingou, Nzuzi (Masudi 80), Mbala (Mbayo 64), Kabamba, Mpiana.
Rwanda: Nkunzingoma - Bizimana, Ndikumana, Ntaganda, Rusanganwa (Habyarimana 54), M Kamanzi, Karekezi (Mulisa 29), K Kamanzi (Munyaneza 64), Sibomana, Makasi, Mbonabucya.

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Guinea	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Rwanda	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
DR Congo	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

Group B

Jan 26 - Bizerte
Kenya 1 (Mulama 58)
Mali 3 (Sissoko 27, Kanoute 63, 82)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)
Kenya: Onyiso - Waweru (Opiyo 88), Kassim, Otieno, Juma, Mulama, Shaban, Muiruri (Ake 73), Mambo, Okoth, Oliech.
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - Diamoutene (D Sidibe 67), F Diawara, A Coulibaly, Thiam, S Traore, M Diarra, S Coulibaly, S Keita (B Toure 88), Sissoko, Kanoute.

Jan 26 - El Menzah, Tunis
Burkina Faso 0
Senegal 0
Att: 2,000. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Mor)
Burkina Faso: Soulama - M Ouattara, Lamine Traore, Coulibaly, R Ouedraogo, Kere, Panandetiguiri, Kambou, A Toure, Dagano, Cisse (T Barro 65).
Senegal: Sylva - Daf, P M Diop, Diawara, Coly (Beye 58), A Cisse, H Camara, Diao, Diouf, Ndoye (P B Diop 80), Niang (Kamara 69).

Jan 30 - Bizerte
Kenya 0
Senegal 3 (Niang 4, 30, P B Diop 18)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Kenya: Onyiso - Opiyo, Kassim, Otieno, Gikenyi, Mulama, Ake (Omondi 61), Juma, Mambo (Muiruri 78), Okoth (Sunguti 89), Oliech.
Senegal: Sylva - Daf (Beye 85), I Faye, P M Diop, Diatta, Diouf (Kamara 69), A Cisse, Diao, P B Diop, H Camara, Niang (Mendy 69).

Jan 30 - El Menzah, Tunis
Burkina Faso 1 (Minoungou 50)
Mali 3 (Kanoute 33, M Diarra 37, S Coulibaly 78)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Shelmani (Lby)
Burkina Faso: Soulama - M Ouattara, Panandetiguiri, Lamine Traore, Coulibaly, R Ouedraogo (Cisse 82), Kere, Kambou, A Toure (Minoungou 46), Dagano, T Barro (Zoundi 69).
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - F Diawara, A Coulibaly, Thiam, S Traore, D Sidibe, Sissoko (David Coulibaly 60), M Diarra, B Toure (Diamoutene 82), S Coulibaly (Demba 90), Kanoute.

Feb 2 - El Menzah, Tunis
Mali 1 (D Traore 33)
Senegal 1 (Beye 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,550. **Ref:** Evehe Divine (Cam)
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - S Traore, F Diawara, Diamoutene, A Coulibaly, David Coulibaly (D Sidibe 65), S Keita, M Diarra, Sissoko (B Toure 75), Demba (S Coulibaly 82), D Traore.
Senegal: Sylva - Beye, Diatta, I Faye, Diao, Sylvain N'Diaye (Ndoye 79), P M Diop, P B Diop, Diouf, H Camara, Niang (Sakho 74).

Feb 2 - Bizerte
Burkina Faso 0
Kenya 3 (Ake 50, Oliech 63, Baraza 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,550. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Burkina Faso: Kabore - M Ouattara, Coulibaly, O Traore (Zoundi 65), R Ouedraogo, Tall (T Barro 46), A Ouattara, Minoungou, Kere, Dagano, Balbone (Cisse 36). *Sent off: R Ouedraogo 76min.*
Kenya: D Ochieng - Otieno, Shaban, Gikenyi (Oyombe 38), Juma, Mulama, Ake (Sunguti 80), Opiyo, Mambo, Oliech, Okoth (Baraza 57).

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Senegal	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Kenya	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Burkina Faso	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

Group C

Jan 25 - Sfax
Zimbabwe 1 (P Ndlovu 46)
Egypt 2 (Abdelhamid 57, Barakat 62)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Lassina Pare (BuF)
Zimbabwe: Murambadoro - Mpofu, Kapenya, Tembo, Mbwando, Nyandoro, Muhoni (Luphahla 65), Yohane, Nengomasha, Sawu (Wilfred Mugeyi 53), P Ndlovu.
Egypt: N El-Sayed - El-Saqqa, T El-Sayed, Al-Tabei, Abdelhamid, T Said (Fathi 70), Emam (Barakat 61), A Hassan, H Said, Hossam, Belal (Khashaba 84).

Jan 25 - Sousse
Algeria 1 (Zafour 51)
Cameroon 1 (Mboma 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Beloufa (Zafour 46), Aribi, Ziani, Yahia, Mansouri, Kraouche (Hadjadj 88), Belmadi (Achiou 78), Mamouni, Cherrad, Boutabout.
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Perrier Doumbe, Mettomo, Song, Tchato (Atouba 63), Geremi, Mbami, Djemba Djemba, Idrissou (Ngom Kome 86), Eto'o, Mboma.

Jan 29 - Sfax
Cameroon 5 (Mboma 31, 44, 64, Mbami 39, 66)
Zimbabwe 3 (P Ndlovu 8, pen 46, Nyandoro 88)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Aboubacar (IvC)
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Tchato, Song, Atouba, Perrier Doumbe, Geremi (Ngom Kome 85), Djemba Djemba, Makoun (Mezague 75), Mbami, Eto'o, Mboma (Idrissou 70).
Zimbabwe: Murambadoro - Mpofu, Kapenya, Mbwando (A Ndlovu 70), Choto, Nyandoro, Yohane, Wilfred Mugeyi, Nengomasha, Luphahla, P Ndlovu.

Jan 29 - Sousse
Algeria 2 (Mamouni 13, Achiou 85)
Egypt 1 (Belal 26)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Aribi, Zafour, Yahia, Ziani (Hadjadj 81), Kraouche, Mansouri, Belmadi (Achiou 56), Mamouni, Cherrad, Boutabout (Haddou 62). *Sent off: Mamouni 58min.*
Egypt: N El-Sayed - El-Saqqa (Khashaba 76), H Said, Al-Tabei, Fathi, Abdelhamid, T Said (Emam 83), A Hassan (Barakat 71), T El-Sayed, Hossam, Belal.

Feb 3 - Monastir
Cameroon 0
Egypt 0
Att: 20,000. **Ref:** Bujsaim (UAE)
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Perrier Doumbe, Song, Mettomo, Atouba, Geremi, Mbami, Djemba Djemba, Makoun (Olembe 53), Eto'o (N'Diefi 81), Mboma (Idrissou 63).
Egypt: A El-Sayed - El-Quabbani, El-Saqqa, Al-Tabei, Fathi, Ghali, Abdelhamid (Belal 46), T Said, A Hassan, Hossam, T El-Sayed.

Feb 3 - Sousse
Algeria 1 (Achiou 72)
Zimbabwe 2 (A Ndlovu 64, Luphahla 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Aribi, Zafour, Haddou (Belmadi 75), Zaoui (Yahia 24), Ziani, Kraouche, Hadjadj, Achiou, Akrour, Fellahi (Cherrad 66).
Zimbabwe: Kapini - Choto, Mpofu, B Ndlovu, Tembo, Sibanda (Nyandoro 83), Shereni (Yohane 87), Nengomasha, Luphahla, P Ndlovu, A Ndlovu (Wilfred Mugeyi 85).

GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Algeria	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Egypt	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Zimbabwe	3	1	0	2	6	8	3

Group D

Jan 27 - Monastir
Nigeria 0
Morocco 1 (Y Hadji 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Yobo, Okoronkwo, Abbey, Babayaro, N Kanu (Ikedia 72), Okocha, Olofinjana, Utaka, Aiyegbeni (Agali 79), Aghahowa.
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Kissi, Zairi (Y Hadji 59), Kharja, Safri, Mokhtari (Yacooubi 70), Chamakh.

Jan 27 - Sfax
Benin 0
South Africa 2 (Nomvete 58, 76)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
Benin: Chitou - Chrysostome, Toklomety, Adjamonsi, S Tchomogo, Latoundji, Oketola, Bocco, Ahoueya, Ogunbiyi (Oladipupo 63), Gaspoz (Moussoro 79).
South Africa: Baron - Molefe (Winstanley 81), Lekgetho, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Mhlongo, Moshoeu, Buckley, Zuma, Nomvete, Mayo.

Jan 31 - Monastir
Nigeria 4 (Yobo 4, Okocha pen 64, Odemwingie 80, 82)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Bujsaim (UAE)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Abbey, Yobo, Okoronkwo, Lawal, Ekwueme, Okocha, Olofinjana, Utaka, N Kanu (Odemwingie 67), Aghahowa (Ikedia 84).
South Africa: Baron - Molefe, Lekgetho, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Mhlongo (Mnguni 46), Moshoeu (Pule 86), Buckley, Zuma (Fredericks 74), Nomvete, Mayo.

Jan 31 - Sfax
Benin 0
Morocco 4 (Chamakh 15, Mokhtari 73, Ouaddou 75, El-Karkouri 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Benin: Chitou - Adjamonsi, Toklomety, Remy (Ogunbiyi 56), Chrysostome, S Tchomogo, Ahoueya, Bocco (Suka 90), Gaspoz (Djaffo 71), Latoundji, O Tchomogo.
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddah, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Kissi (Mokhtari 62), Kharja, Yacooubi (Alla 77), Safri, Zairi (Y Hadji 46), Chamakh.

Feb 4 - Sfax
Benin 1 (Latoundji 90)
Nigeria 2 (Lawal 35, Utaka 76)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Benin: Agueh - Suka, S Tchomogo (Remy 70), Chrysostome, Toklomety, Oladipupo (Agnide 74), Oketola, Ahoueya, Adjamonsi, O Tchomogo, Latoundji.
Nigeria: Enyeama - Abbey, Yobo, Okoronkwo, Olofinjana (Ekong 88), Utaka (Ikedia 84), Okocha, Lawal, Udeze, N Kanu, Aghahowa (Odemwingie 66).

Feb 4 - Sousse
Morocco 1 (Safri pen 37)
South Africa 1 (Mayo 30)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Guirat (Tun)
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Mokhtari (Yacooubi 82), Y Hadji (Hdiouad 90), Kissi, Kharja, Safri, Zairi.
South Africa: Arendse - Molefe, Lekgetho, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Winstanley, T Mokoena (Pule 82), Buckley (Nhleko 62), Zuma, Nomvete, Mayo.

GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Nigeria	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
South Africa	3	1	1	1	3	5	4
Benin	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

Top two from each group qualified for quarter-finals

● *Complete results, line-ups and squads in next month's issue*

ASIAN CUP 2004

In China

Finals schedule

Group A

July 17 China v Bahrain (Beijing, 20:00)
July 18 Qatar v Indonesia (Beijing, 17:00)
July 21 Bahrain v Qatar (Beijing, 18:30)
July 21 Indonesia v China (Beijing, 21:00)
July 25 China v Qatar (Beijing, 19:00)
July 25 Bahrain v Indonesia (Jinan, 19:00)

Group B

July 19 South Korea v Jordan (Jinan, 18:30)
July 19 Kuwait v UAE (Jinan, 21:00)
July 23 Jordan v Kuwait (Jinan, 18:30)
July 23 UAE v South Korea (Jinan, 21:00)
July 27 Jordan v UAE (Beijing, 19:00)
July 27 South Korea v Kuwait (Jinan, 19:00)

Group C

July 18 Saudi Arabia v Turkmenistan (Chengdu, 18:45)
July 18 Iraq v Uzbekistan (Chengdu, 21:15)
July 22 Turkmenistan v Iraq (Chengdu, 18:30)
July 22 Uzbekistan v Saudi Arabia (Chengdu, 21:00)
July 26 Saudi Arabia v Iraq (Chengdu, 19:00)
July 26 Turkmenistan v Uzbekistan (Chongqing, 19:00)

Group D

July 20 Japan v Oman (Chongqing, 18:00)
July 20 Iran v Thailand (Chongqing, 20:30)
July 24 Oman v Iran (Chongqing, 18:00)
July 24 Thailand v Japan (Chongqing, 20:30)
July 28 Oman v Thailand (Chengdu, 19:00)
July 28 Japan v Iran (Chongqing, 19:00)

Quarter-finals

July 30 Gp C 1st v Gp A 2nd (Chengdu, 18:00) QF1
July 30 Gp A 1st v Gp C 2nd (Beijing, 21:00) QF2
July 31 Gp D 1st v Gp B 2nd (Chongqing, 18:00) QF3
July 31 Gp B 1st v Gp D 2nd (Jinan, 21:00) QF4

Semi-finals

Aug 3 QF1 winners v QF3 winners (Jinan, 18:00)
Aug 3 QF2 winners v QF4 winners (Beijing, 21:00)

Third-place play-off

Aug 6 Beijing, 20:00

Final

Aug 7 Beijing, 20:00

All times are local

GULF CUP

In Kuwait City

Dec 26
United Arab Emirates 0
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al-Shlhoob pen 15, Takar 83)
HT: 0-1

Dec 26
Kuwait 0
Oman 0

Dec 27
Bahrain 0
Qatar 0

Dec 28
Yemen 1 (Jamal 54)
Oman 1 (Bashir 64)
HT: 0-0

Dec 29
Kuwait 0
United Arab Emirates 2 (Rashed 70, Srour 77)
HT: 0-0

Dec 29
Saudi Arabia 0
Qatar 0

Dec 30
Bahrain 5 (Salmeen 2, Hebail 19, 47, Yousuf 40, Al-Dossari 75)
Yemen 1 (Al-Salmi pen 15)
HT: 3-1
Sent off: Srouri 44min, Amqi 50min (both Yemen)

Dec 31
Oman 2 (A Mubarak 32, Saleh 51)
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 1-0

Jan 1
Kuwait 4 (Abdulkudous 33, B Abdullah pen 40, Mutawa 63, Salama 87)
Yemen 0
HT: 2-0

Jan 1
Bahrain 0
Saudi Arabia 1 (Suwaid 74)
HT: 0-0

Jan 3
United Arab Emirates 0
Qatar 0
Sent off: Kassem (UAE) 75min

Jan 3
Oman 0
Bahrain 1 (Salmeen 13)
HT: 0-1

Jan 4
Kuwait 1 (Abdulkudous 89)
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Shlhoob 76)
HT: 0-0

Jan 5
Qatar 3 (Mustapha 22, Abdullah 39, Salmeen 58)
Yemen 0
HT: 2-0

Jan 6
Oman 1 (Ali 62)
Saudi Arabia 2 (Noor 69, Al-Qahtani 90)
HT: 0-0

Jan 7
United Arab Emirates 1 (Khalil 7)
Bahrain 3 (Farhan 27, Yousuf 28, 60)
HT: 1-2

Jan 8
Yemen 0
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al-Qahtani 9, 31)
HT: 0-2

Jan 8
Kuwait 1 (B Abdullah 5)
Qatar 2 (Salmeen 41, Mustapha 58)
HT: 1-1

Jan 10
Kuwait 0
Bahrain 4 (Yousuf 6, 65, Hebail 17, Salmeen 51)
HT: 0-2

Jan 11
Yemen 0
United Arab Emirates 3 (Omar 4, Bloushi 19, Srour 85)
HT: 0-2

Jan 11
Oman 2 (Bashir pen 45, Al-Maimani 75)
Qatar 0
HT: 1-0

GULF CUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	6	4	2	0	8	2	14
Bahrain	6	4	1	1	13	3	13
Qatar	6	2	3	1	5	3	9
Oman	6	2	2	2	6	4	8
UAE	6	2	1	3	6	7	7
Kuwait	6	1	2	3	6	9	5
Yemen	6	0	1	5	2	18	1

CARLSBERG CUP

In Hong Kong

Semi-finals

Jan 22
Sweden 0
Norway 3 (F Johnsen 44, H Flo 54, 63)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Fong (HK)
Sweden: Isaksson - Ostlund, Antonsson, Von Schleebrugge, C Andersson, M Nilsson, Arneng, Ericsson, Rubarth (L Nilsson 59), Skoog, A 'Djurgardens' Johansson.
Norway: Skjeldestad - Hoiland, Riseth, Hangeland, Stensaas, Solli (Kah 84), Hoseth (Gashi 84), Sorensen, F Johnsen, Brattbakk (Fjortoft 57), H Flo (Stadheim 76).

Jan 22
Hong Kong League XI 0
Honduras 1 (Cacho 18)
HT: 0-1
Honduras: H Medina - Marin, M Palacios, Ninrod Medina, Jose Pineda, Velasquez (Javier Martinez 61), M Suazo, Cacho, Gonzalez (Nunez 46), S Martinez (Reyes 76), Guerrero.

Third-place play-off

Jan 25
Hong Kong League XI 0
Sweden 3 (Stefanidis 8, L Nilsson 74, 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 14,603. **Ref:** Kunthama (Tha)
Sweden: Kihlstedt - Ostlund, Lundqvist, Von Schleebrugge (Jardler 46), Stenman, A 'Halmstads' Johansson (C Andersson 57), Arneng, A 'Djurgardens' Johansson, Stefanidis, Skoog (Pinones-Arce 46), L Nilsson.

Final

Jan 25
Norway 3 (Brattbakk 27, F Johnsen 39, Hoseth 86)
Honduras 1 (S Martinez 30)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 14,603. **Ref:** Chan (HK)
Norway: Skjeldestad - Hoiland, Riseth, Hangeland, Stensaas, Solli, Hoseth, Sorensen (Kah 81), F Johnsen, Brattbakk (Johansen 65), H Flo (Braaten 90).
Honduras: H Medina - Izaguirre, M Palacios, Ninrod Medina, Javier Martinez, Cacho (Gonzalez 63), Marin (Costa 77), M Suazo, Guerrero, S Martinez (Ferreira 55), Velasquez (Nunez 46).

COSAFA CASTLE CUP

1st rnd

Jan 10 - Curepipe
Mauritius 2 (Lekgetho og 53, Perle 81)
South Africa 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Raolimanana (Mad)
Mauritius: Doro - L'Enfle, Speville, Mourgine, Eduoard, Cundasamy, Bax (Naboth 84), Louis (Punchoo 77), Periatambee, Bayaram, Perle.
South Africa: Roberts - Coyle, Lekgetho, Winstanley, Mhlongo, Sibaya, Buckley, Moshoeu, Fredericks, Zuma (Pule 69), Mayo.

Still to play:
Lesotho v Botswana (Feb 29, Maseru)
Mozambique v Madagascar (Apr 18, Maputo)
Angola v Namibia (May 9, Luanda)

Byes to quarter-finals:
Zimbabwe (holders), Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS TOURNAMENT

Jan 30 - Road Town
British Virgin Islands 5 (Morris 2, Williams, Ferron, Rabsatt og)
US Virgin Islands 0
HT: 3-0

Jan 31 - Road Town
US Virgin Islands 0
Dominica 5 (Marshall, Dangler, Casimair, George, Ferguson og)
HT: 0-2

Feb 1 - Tortola
British Virgin Islands 1 (Morris)
Dominica 2 (Marshall, Peters)

BRITISH VIRGIN IS TNMT – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dominica	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
British Virgin Is	2	1	0	1	6	2	3
US Virgin Is	2	0	0	2	0	10	0

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2nd rnd draw

Bayern Munich v Real Madrid
Celta Vigo v Arsenal
Lokomotiv Moscow v Monaco
Sparta Prague v Milan
1st legs, February 24; 2nd legs, March 10

Deportivo La Coruna v Juventus
FC Porto v Manchester United
Real Sociedad v Lyon
Stuttgart v Chelsea
1st legs, February 25; 2nd legs, March 9

UEFA CUP

3rd rnd draw

Auxerre (Fra) v Panathinaikos (Gre)
Benfica (Por) v Rosenborg (Nor)
Brondby (Den) v Barcelona (Spa)
Celtic (Sco) v Teplice (Cze)
Club Brugge (Blg) v Debrecen (Hun)
Galatasaray (Tur) v Villarreal (Spa)
Gaziantepspor (Tur) v Roma (Ita)
Groclin Grodzisk (Pol) v Bordeaux (Fra)
Liverpool (Eng) v Levski Sofia (Bul)
Marseille (Fra) v Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (Ukr)
Moscow Spartak (Rus) v Mallorca (Spa)
Parma (Ita) v Genclerbirligi (Tur)
Perugia (Ita) v PSV Eindhoven (Hol)
Sochaux (Fra) v Internazionale (Ita)
Valencia (Spa) v Besiktas (Tur)
Valerenga (Nor) v Newcastle (Eng)
1st legs, February 26; 2nd legs, March 3

ARMENIA

ARMENIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pyunik Yerevan	28	23	5	0	87	11	74
Banants	28	21	3	4	89	15	66
Shirak Gyumri	28	17	2	9	63	34	53
Mika Ashtarak	28	15	6	7	49	29	51
Kotaik Abovian	28	8	7	13	29	56	31
Dinamo Yerevan	28	5	4	19	18	69	19
Lernagorts	28	3	6	19	20	72	15
Araks Ararat	28	2	3	23	17	86	9

Zvartnots withdrew; Banants and Spartak merged – played under Banants name; Ararat Yerevan were excluded for failing to release players for a national team training camp; Lernayin Artsakh, who share the same sponsor as Ararat, withdrew in protest at the latter's exclusion

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	20	12	5	3	37	15	41
Rapid Wien	20	11	5	4	35	26	38
Grazer AK	20	11	4	5	32	20	37
Pasching	20	9	4	7	34	30	31
Bregenz	20	9	4	7	30	32	31
Admira	20	7	4	9	26	28	25
Mattersburg	20	5	7	8	21	31	22
Salzburg	20	6	2	12	27	25	20
Sturm Graz	20	4	6	10	20	29	18
Karnten	20	3	5	12	16	42	14

BELGIUM

Friday, January 16

Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 85)
Club Brugge 0 Att: 24,630

Saturday, January 17

Gent 2 (De Brul 29, Zezeto 77)
Beveren 1 (Dever og 32) Att: 8,300

Lierse 1 (De Wilde 30)
Charleroi 1 (Dufer 44) Att: 6,000

Mons 3 (Niemi 40, 90, La Placa 66)
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 5,000

St Truiden 1 (De Ceulaer 7)
Lokeren 2 (Tailson 19, 44) Att: 6,000

Standard 3 (Mpenza 11 90, Turaci pen 90)
Mouscron 3 (Dugardein 47, Pieroni 50, 56) Att: 18,000

Sunday, January 18

Cercle Brugge 2 (Jbari 67, Vlahos 80)
Heusden-Zolder 3 (Barka 30, 41, De Conde 84) Att: 6,500

La Louviere 1 (Murcy 14)
Westerlo 1 (Paas pen 38) Att: 3,500

Royal Antwerp 0
Anderlecht 2 (Dindane 65, Iachtchouk 83) Att: 10,000

Saturday, January 24

Anderlecht 2 (Seol 1, Mornar 72)
Gent 0 Att: 23,000

Charleroi 4 (Ikpeba 21, Oulfade 45, 59, Ciani 52)
Genk 3 (Chatelle 12, Vandenbergh 76, Roussel 77) Att: 7,000

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Hoefkens pen 45)
Lierse 1 (Sels 57) Att: 8,000

Heusden-Zolder 1 (De Conde 27)
La Louviere 3 (Van Handenhoven 69, Tilmant 73, Cooreman 74) Att: 2,481

Lokeren 1 (Kristinsson 35)
Standard 1 (Aliyu 49) Att: 6,800

Mouscron 3 (Pieroni 50, 66, 74)
Mons 2 (Ban 89, 90) Att: 9,500

St Truiden 1 (Delorge 88)
Beveren 1 (Kaiper 49) Att: 6,000

Sunday, January 25

Club Brugge 5 (Clement 59, Verheyen 61, 82, Mendoza 68, 84)
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 24,594

Westerlo 2 (Brogno 77, Dosunmu 88)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Goots 59) Att: 4,500

Saturday, January 31

Beveren 1 (Pehe 20)
Lokeren 1 (Tailson 55) Att: 7,000

Genk 1 (Chatelle 62)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Cooreman 63) Att: 23,607

Gent 0
Westerlo 2 (Dosunmu 9, Janssens 55) Att: 7,150

Mons 1 (Wamberto pen 80)
Standard 1 (Vandooren 11) Att: 7,000

Royal Antwerp 1 (Johnson 54)
Heusden-Zolder 1 (De Camargo 14) Att: 5,500

Sunday, February 1

Cercle Brugge 3 (Vlahos 60, Jbari 76, Notte 79)
Charleroi 2 (Gilson 3, Detal 47) Att: 3,750

Lierse 2 (De Bilde 19, De Wilde 53)
Mouscron 2 (Zewlakow 4, Laybutt 41) Att: 6,000

St Truiden 1 (Janssen 63)
Anderlecht 3 (Seol 29, Kompany 62, Tihinen 74) Att: 10,500

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	20	18	1	1	52	15	55
Standard	20	12	5	3	39	18	41
Genk	20	10	5	5	40	26	35
Mouscron	20	9	8	3	40	26	35
Club Brugge	19	9	4	6	37	23	31
Westerlo	20	8	7	5	24	25	31
St Truiden	20	7	7	6	24	27	28
Gent	20	6	8	6	21	20	26
Beveren	20	8	2	10	27	31	26
Germinal B	20	6	7	7	18	23	25
La Louviere	19	5	9	5	25	24	24
Cercle Brugge	20	5	8	7	18	31	23
Lierse	20	4	10	6	21	24	22
Lokeren	20	4	6	10	22	33	18
Mons	20	3	8	9	20	31	17
Heusden-Zolder	20	4	5	11	19	34	17
Charleroi	20	3	6	11	16	26	15
Royal Antwerp	20	3	4	13	14	40	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Luigi Pieroni (Mouscron)
11 Andres Mendoza (Club Brugge)
11 Cedric Roussel (Genk)

BELGIAN CUP – quarter-finals

1st legs
Jan 21: Germinal Beerschot 1 Beveren 2; Heusden-Zolder 2 Anderlecht 3; La Louviere 2 Club Brugge 1; Mouscron 3 Cercle Brugge 2.

2nd legs
Feb 3: Club Brugge 2 La Louviere 0 *Club Brugge 3-2 on agg.*
Feb 4: Anderlecht 0 Heusden-Zolder 0 *Anderlecht 3-2 on agg*; Beveren 1 Germinal Beerschot 0 *Beveren 3-1 on agg*; Cercle Brugge 0 Mouscron 0 *Mouscron 3-2 on agg.*

BULGARIA

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lok Plovdiv	15	12	1	2	35	12	37
CSKA	15	11	2	2	33	12	35
Slavia	15	11	1	3	34	15	34
Levski	15	10	4	1	26	9	34
Lovech	15	9	5	1	22	9	32
Marek	15	7	0	8	21	26	21
Naftex	15	5	4	6	24	18	19
Lok Sofia	15	4	6	5	22	24	18
Spartak Varna	15	5	3	7	19	21	18
Vidima-Rakovski	15	4	4	7	17	24	16
Chernomorets	15	3	5	7	16	24	14
Cherno More	15	3	5	7	17	28	14
Rodopa	15	4	2	9	13	26	14
Belasitsa	15	4	1	10	15	32	13
Makedonska	15	3	1	11	16	30	10
Botev	15	2	2	11	17	37	8

CROATIA

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hajduk	17	13	1	3	33	14	40
Dinamo	17	11	4	2	40	15	37
Kamen Ingrad	17	7	4	6	28	21	25
Osijek	17	7	2	8	27	31	23
Zadar	17	6	5	6	30	36	23
Rijeka	17	5	7	5	22	20	22
Inker	17	5	7	5	20	20	22
Slaven	17	5	7	5	17	18	22
Varteks	17	4	7	6	16	20	19
Zagreb	17	3	8	6	18	26	17
Cibalia	17	3	4	10	20	31	13
Marsonia	17	3	4	10	20	39	13

CZECH REPUBLIC

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ostrava	16	10	6	0	33	12	36
Sparta	16	8	5	3	27	12	29
Olomouc	16	8	3	5	29	16	27
Slavia	16	8	3	5	20	10	27
Zlin	16	8	3	5	19	16	27
Liberec	16	7	5	4	18	12	26
Synot	16	7	4	5	24	21	25
Ceske Budejovice	16	6	4	6	19	20	22
Teplice	16	5	6	5	17	18	21
Brno	16	5	6	5	19	22	21
Opava	16	6	2	8	19	30	20
Pribram	16	5	3	8	21	20	18
Jablonec	16	3	8	5	14	22	17
Plzen	16	3	4	9	13	27	13
Zizkov	16	3	3	10	8	22	12
Chmel Blsany	16	2	3	11	16	36	9

DENMARK

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	20	14	4	2	35	14	46
Esbjerg	20	13	4	3	39	21	43
FC Copenhagen	20	11	6	3	31	16	39
OB	20	10	5	5	41	30	35
AaB	20	8	6	6	30	27	30
Midtjylland	20	7	5	8	35	31	26
AGF	20	8	2	10	31	41	26
Viborg	20	6	6	8	31	29	24
Herfolge	20	5	5	10	21	28	20
Nordsjaelland	20	4	6	10	25	38	18
Frem	20	4	3	13	22	39	15
AB	20	3	2	15	17	44	11

ENGLAND

Saturday, January 10

Arsenal 4 (Henry pen 38, Queudrue og 45, Pires 57, Ljungberg 68)
Middlesbrough 1 (Maccarone pen 86) Att: 38,117

Birmingham 2 (Clemence 16, Kenna 67)
Southampton 1 (Ormerod 6) Att: 29,071

Blackburn 3 (Gresko 3, Yorke 24, Cole 34)
Bolton 4 (Nolan 1, 78, Djorkaeff 43, Giannakopoulos 73) Att: 23,538

Charlton 2 (Euell 38, 79)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 26,148

Fulham 2 (Saha pen 45, Malbranque 46)
Everton 1 (Kilbane 81) Att: 17,103

Leeds 0
Tottenham 1 (Keane 56) Att: 35,365

Liverpool 1 (Delaney og 36)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 43,771

Portsmouth 4 (Stefanovic 19, Aiyegbeni 52, 77, Sheringham 58)
Manchester City 2 (Anelka 21, Sibierski 45) Att: 20,120

Sunday, January 11

Leicester 0
Chelsea 4 (Hasselbaink 12, 44, Mutu 88, Babayaro 90) Att: 31,547

Manchester Utd 0
Newcastle 0 Att: 67,622

Saturday, January 17

Bolton 1 (Davies 53)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 26,558

Everton 0
Charlton 1 (Stuart 41) Att: 36,322

Manchester City 1 (Anelka 50)
Blackburn 1 (Flitcroft 55) Att: 47,090

Middlesbrough 3 (Juninho 8, Maccarone 89, Curtis og 90)
Leicester 3 (Dickov 50, 65, Bent 76) Att: 27,125

Southampton 2 (Ormerod 36, Phillips 43)
Leeds 1 (Kilgallon 76) Att: 31,976

Tottenham 2 (Keane pen 24, Helder Postiga 54)
Liverpool 1 (Kewell 75) Att: 36,104

Wolverhampton 1 (Miller 67)
Manchester Utd 0 Att: 29,396

Sunday, January 18

Aston Villa 0
Arsenal 2 (Henry 29, pen 53) Att: 39,380

Chelsea 0
Birmingham 0 Att: 41,073

Monday, January 19

Newcastle 3 (O'Brien 4, Speed 41, Robert 54)
Fulham 1 (Davis 74) Att: 50,104

Wednesday, January 21

Wolverhampton 1 (Miller 90)
Liverpool 1 (Cheyrou 42) Att: 29,380

Saturday, January 31

Birmingham 1 (John 90)
Newcastle 1 (Speed 37) Att: 26,249

Charlton 1 (Johansson 12)
Bolton 2 (Pedersen 1, Nolan 78) Att: 26,249

Fulham 2 (Malbranque pen 45, McBride 67)
Tottenham 1 (Keane pen 18) Att: 17,024

Leeds 0
Middlesbrough 3 (Zenden 53, Job 77, Ricketts pen 89) Att: 35,970

Leicester 0
Aston Villa 5 (Vassell 50, 60, Crouch 57, 68, Dublin 64) Att: 31,056

Liverpool 0
Everton 0 Att: 44,056

Manchester Utd 3 (Saha 18, Scholes 37, Van Nistelrooy 61)
Southampton 2 (Phillips 38, 53) Att: 67,758

Portsmouth 0
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 20,112

Sunday, February 1

Arsenal 2 (Tarnat og 39, Henry 83)
Manchester City 1 (Anelka 89) Att: 38,103

Blackburn 2 (Flitcroft 3, Gallagher 87)
Chelsea 3 (Lampard 25, 35, Johnson 88) Att: 24,867

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	23	16	7	0	44	15	55
Man Utd	23	17	2	4	43	17	53
Chelsea	23	15	4	4	43	19	49
Charlton	23	10	7	6	32	25	37
Liverpool	23	9	7	7	32	24	34
Newcastle	23	8	10	5	31	24	34
Fulham	23	10	4	9	36	33	34
Bolton	23	8	8	7	28	34	32
Birmingham	22	8	7	7	20	26	31
Southampton	23	8	6	9	23	21	30
Aston Villa	23	8	6	9	26	27	30
Middlesbrough	22	7	7	8	23	26	28
Tottenham	23	8	3	12	27	33	27
Everton	23	6	7	10	25	29	25
Man City	23	5	8	10	32	35	23
Blackburn	23	6	5	12	34	39	23
Portsmouth	23	6	5	12	25	33	23
Leicester	23	4	8	11	31	43	20
Wolverhampton	23	4	8	11	20	44	20
Leeds	23	4	5	14	19	47	17

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
16 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
15 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)
14 Louis Saha (Fulham/Manchester Utd)

FA CUP – 3rd rnd (last 64)

Jan 3: Accrington 0 Colchester 0; Barnsley 0 Scunthorpe 0; Birmingham 4 Blackburn 0; Bradford City 1 Luton 2; Cardiff 0 Sheffield Utd 1; Coventry 2 Peterborough 1; Crewe 0 Telford 1; Everton 3 Norwich 1; Gillingham 3 Charlton 2; Ipswich 3 Derby 0; Kidderminster 1 Wolverhampton 1; Manchester City 2 Leicester 2; Mansfield 0 Burnley 2; Middlesbrough 2 Notts County 0; Millwall 2 Walsall 1; Northampton 1 Rotherham 1; Nottingham Forest 1 West Brom 0; Portsmouth 2 Blackpool 1; Preston 3 Reading 3; Southampton 0 Newcastle 3; Southend 1 Scarborough 1; Sunderland 1 Hartlepool 0; Swansea 2 Macclesfield 1; Tottenham 3 Crystal Palace 0; Tranmere 1 Bolton 1; Watford 2 Chelsea 2; Wigan 1 West Ham 2; Wimbledon 1 Stoke 1.
Jan 4: Aston Villa 1 Manchester Utd 2; Fulham 2 Cheltenham 1; Leeds 1 Arsenal 4; Yeovil 0 Liverpool 2.

3rd rnd replays
Jan 13: Bolton 1 Tranmere 2 (aet); Colchester 2 Accrington 1; Reading 1 Preston 2; Rotherham 1 Northampton 2; Scunthorpe 2 Barnsley 0; Stoke 0 Wimbledon 1; Wolverhampton 2 Kidderminster 0.
Jan 14: Chelsea 4 Watford 0; Leicester 1 Manchester City 3; Scarborough 1 Southend 0.

4th rnd (last 32)

Jan 24: Arsenal 4 Middlesbrough 1; Birmingham 1 Wimbledon 0; Burnley 3 Gillingham 1; Coventry 1 Colchester 1; Ipswich 1 Sunderland 2; Liverpool 2 Newcastle 1; Luton 0 Tranmere 1; Portsmouth 2 Scunthorpe 1; Scarborough 0 Chelsea 1; Swansea 2 Preston 1.
Jan 25: Everton 1 Fulham 1; Manchester City 1 Tottenham 1; Northampton 0 Manchester Utd 3; Nottingham Forest 0 Sheffield Utd 3; Wolverhampton 1 West Ham 3.
Still to play: Telford v Millwall.

4th rnd replays
Feb 3: Coventry 3 Colchester 1.
Feb 4: Fulham 2 Everton 1; Tottenham 3 Manchester City 4.

FRANCE

Friday, January 9

Monaco 3 (Giuly 32, pen 90, Morientes 48)
Lyon 0 Att: 16,000

Saturday, January 10

Ajaccio 2 (Lacombe 10, 75)
Le Mans 0 Att: 4,000

Auxerre 2 (Tainio 4, Kalou 16)
Marseille 0 Att: 20,000

Guingamp 3 (Dagano 30, 33, 62)
Strasbourg 2 (Le Pen 40, Niang 45) Att: 12,000

Lens 0
Nantes 0 Att: 32,000

Metz 1 (Thiaw 66)
Bastia 0 Att: 12,428

Montpellier 1 (Rui Pataca 56)
Bordeaux 2 (Chamakh 11, Mavuba 53) Att: 10,436

Paris SG 1 (Tavlaridis og 12)
Lille 0 Att: 39,000

Sochaux 0
Nice 0 Att: 12,728

Toulouse 2 (Faure 6, Dieuze pen 83)
Rennes 0 Att: 13,330

Saturday, January 17

Bastia 0
Monaco 0 Att: 6,000

Bordeaux 2 (Francia 17, Franco 85)
Guingamp 0 Att: 18,000

Lille 0
Toulouse 1 (Faure 37) Att: 12,500

Lyon 3 (Dhorasoo 10, Luyindula 37, Viale 90)
Montpellier 0 Att: 32,658

Nantes 4 (Vahirua 9, Berson 12, Moldovan 56, N'zigou 85)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 26,817

Nice 0
Le Mans 1 (Cousin 42) Att: 11,261

Paris SG 0
Metz 0 Att: 40,603

Rennes 4 (Frei 39, 65, Flachez og 69, Kallstrom 84)
Sochaux 0 Att: 15,225

Strasbourg 0
Auxerre 2 (Kapo 19, Cisse 90) Att: 15,000

Sunday, January 18

Marseille 3 (Drogba 9, 48, Sychev 87)
Lens 2 (Moreira 13, Thomert 62) Att: 55,000

Wednesday, January 21

Monaco 1 (Morientes 41)
Nice 1 (Meslin pen 90) Att: 16,000

Montpellier 1 (Bamogo pen 21)
Sochaux 3 (Frau 15, 28, 43) Att: 10,755

Tuesday, January 27

Metz 1 (Rodriguez 47)
Marseille 1 (Drogba 77) Att: 22,000

Wednesday, January 28

Lyon 3 (Muller 65, Luyindula 67, Essien 82)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 32,000

Friday, January 30

Monaco 1 (Squillaci 27)
Paris SG 1 (Heinze 32) Att: 17,000

Saturday, January 31

Ajaccio 1 (Danjou 7)
Nice 1 (Ba 75) Att: 5,000

Auxerre 5 (Cisse 8, pen 45, Akale 10, 59, Tainio 28)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 9,500

Guingamp 0
Rennes 2 (Arribage 71, Barbosa 79) Att: 15,723

Le Mans 0
Nantes 1 (Moldovan 13) Att: 14,000

Lens 2 (Ekani 70, Bakari 73)
Strasbourg 1 (Mouloungui 59) Att: 30,000

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 01.02.04

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Ara Hakopian	Banants (Arm)	45	1	45
2	Tor Henning Hamre	Flora Tallinn (Est)	39	1	39
3	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	18	2	36
	Viktor Dobrecovs	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	36	1	36
	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	18	2	36
6	Djibril Cisse	Auxerre (Fra)	17	2	34
7	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	16	2	32
	Alan Shearer	Newcastle (Eng)	16	2	32
	Andrii Shevchenko	Milan (Ita)	16	2	32
10	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester Utd (Eng)	15	2	30
11	Louis Saha	Manchester Utd (Eng)	14	2	28
12	Roland Kollmann	Grazer AK (Aut)	18	1.5	27
	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	18	1.5	27
14	Didier Drogba	Marseille (Fra)	13	2	26
	Pierre-Alain Frau	Sochaux (Fra)	13	2	26
	Girt Karlsons	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	26	1	26
17	Harald Brattbakk	Rosenborg (Nor)	17	1.5	25.5

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

Metz 0
Lille 1 (Acimovic 40) Att: 12,712

Montpellier 1 (Bamogo 21)
Bastia 1 (Cauet 64) Att: 14,000

Sochaux 2 (Mathieu 31, Frau pen 70)
Marseille 1 (Gnanhouan og 5) Att: 19,754

Toulouse 0
Lyon 1 (Dhorasoo 61) Att: 26,297

Wednesday, February 4

Montpellier 0
Marseille 1 (Drogba 65) Att: 21,085

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	22	14	6	2	37	16	48
Lyon	22	13	5	4	39	17	44
Auxerre	22	13	2	7	39	18	41
Sochaux	22	12	5	5	34	24	41
Paris SG	22	11	7	4	27	17	40
Marseille	22	12	1	9	30	24	37
Nantes	22	10	4	8	24	18	34
Nice	22	7	11	4	20	18	32
Bordeaux	22	9	5	8	22	25	32
Lens	22	10	2	10	20	32	32
Rennes	22	7	8	7	26	21	29
Strasbourg	22	7	5	10	33	34	26
Lille	22	6	7	9	22	26	25
Bastia	22	6	7	9	24	32	25
Ajaccio	22	6	5	11	20	31	23
Montpellier	22	6	4	12	28	38	22
Metz	22	5	6	11	16	23	21
Le Mans	22	4	7	11	18	33	19
Toulouse	22	4	6	12	16	31	18
Guingamp	22	5	3	14	19	36	18

LEADING GOALSCORERS
17 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
13 Didier Drogba (Marseille)
13 Pierre-Alain Frau (Sochaux)
12 Vladimir Manchev (Lille)

FRENCH CUP – last 32

Jan 23: Bayonne 1 Bordeaux 0 (aet).
Jan 24: Amiens 3 Plabennec 0; Auxerre 2 Montpellier 0; Besancon 1 Creteil 3; Bourg-Peronnas 0 Lyon 5; Brive 3 Nancy 2 (aet); Caen 1 Cannes 0; Dijon 2 Lens 1; GFCO Ajaccio 1 Brest 3; Gueugnon 1 Reims 3; Marseille 1 Paris SG 2 (aet); Valence 2 Chateauroux 2 (aet; Chateauroux 5-4 on pens).
Jan 25: Croix-de-Savoie 0 Rennes 2; Fontenay-Le-Comte 0 Nantes 3; Toulouse 0 Nice 0 (aet; Toulouse 5-4 on pens); Valenciennes 0 Monaco 0 (aet; Monaco 4-1 on pens).

GERMANY

Friday, January 30

Borussia Dortmund 0
Schalke 1 (Sand 89) Att: 83,000

Saturday, January 31

Bochum 1 (Fahrenhorst 35)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 20,793

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Skela 45)
Bayern Munich 1 (Makaay 1) Att: 37,500

Koln 1 (Podolski 52)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 51,000

1860 Munich 2 (Lauth 18, 39)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Lokvenc 25) Att: 20,300

Stuttgart 2 (Hleb 59, Kuranyi 75)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 42,000

Werder Bremen 4 (Ailton 17, 30, Micoud 35, Hadeo Valdez 90)
Hertha 0 Att: 34,500

Sunday, February 1

Freiburg 1 (Antar 54)
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 24,500

Hannover 3 (Krupnikovic pen 13, Mathis 28, Jaime 77)
Hamburg 2 (Barbarez 8, Romeo 78) Att: 22,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Werder Bremen	18	13	3	2	49	20	42
Stuttgart	18	11	5	2	26	7	38
Bayern Munich	18	10	6	2	41	20	36
B Leverkusen	18	10	5	3	34	18	35
Bochum	18	8	5	5	31	22	29
Schalke	18	7	6	5	24	23	27
B Dortmund	18	7	4	7	29	26	25
Wolfsburg	18	8	1	9	35	33	25
Freiburg	18	7	3	8	25	37	24
Hannover	18	6	5	7	33	39	23
Hamburg	18	6	5	7	25	32	23
1860 Munich	18	6	4	8	20	27	22
Hansa Rostock	18	5	4	9	24	29	19
M'gladbach	18	5	4	9	18	25	19
Koln	18	4	4	10	16	26	16
Kaiserslautern*	18	5	3	10	21	33	15
Eintracht F'furt	18	3	4	11	17	29	13
Hertha	18	2	7	9	15	37	13

**3pts deducted for failing to supply accurate information when re-applying for professional licence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
12 Martin Max (Hansa Rostock)
11 Vahid Hashemian (Bochum)
11 Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich)

GERMAN CUP – quarter-finals

Feb 3: Greuther Furth 2 Werder Bremen 3; Hoffenheim 0 Lubeck 1; Monchengladbach 2 Duisburg 2 (aet; Monchengladbach 4-3 on pens).
Feb 4: Alemannia Aachen 2 Bayern Munich 1.

GREECE

Jan 10: OFI 2 Iraklis 2; Kallithea 0 Ionikos 1.
Jan 11: Halkidona 2 Proodeftiki 1; Xanthi 0 Panathinaikos 1; AEK 2 Aigaleo 2; Paniliakos 0 Panionios 0; Olympiakos 1 PAOK 2; Aris 3 Akratitos 0.
Jan 17: Aigaleo 0 PAOK 0; Iraklis 2 Kallithea 0.
Jan 18: Ionikos 0 AEK 1; Proodeftiki 0 Aris 0; Panathinaikos 1 OFI 0; Paniliakos 0 Halkidona 2; Panionios 1 Xanthi 0; Akratitos 0 Olympiakos 5.
Jan 24: Ionikos 0 Aigaleo 0; PAOK 2 Akratitos 2.
Jan 25: AEK 4 Iraklis 0; Olympiakos 4 Proodeftiki 0; Kallithea 0 Panathinaikos 3; Aris 1 Paniliakos 0; OFI 1 Panionios 1; Xanthi 2 Halkidona 1.
Jan 31: Iraklis 2 Ionikos 1.
Feb 1: Aigaleo 2 Akratitos 1; Proodeftiki 1 PAOK 3; Paniliakos 1 Olympiakos 3; Panionios 0 Kallithea 0; Xanthi 1 Aris 0; Halkidona 2 OFI 1; Panathinaikos 2 AEK 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	19	15	2	2	47	12	47
Panathinaikos	19	14	4	1	37	12	46
PAOK	19	12	4	3	32	17	40
Aigaleo	19	10	6	3	23	13	36
AEK	19	10	5	4	40	19	35
Halkidona	19	8	5	6	27	24	29
Iraklis	19	8	5	6	26	24	29
Panionios	19	6	9	4	25	19	27
Xanthi	19	6	4	9	18	25	22
OFI	19	5	5	9	19	32	20
Ionikos	19	5	4	10	21	28	19
Aris	19	5	4	10	17	26	19
Paniliakos	19	3	6	10	24	35	15
Kallithea	19	1	9	9	20	30	12
Proodeftiki	19	1	7	11	11	34	10
Akratitos	19	1	5	13	17	54	8

HOLLAND

Wednesday, January 21

Roda JC 1 (Anastasiou 15)
Ajax 2 (Sikora 49, Soetaers 62) Att: 18,112

Friday, January 23

AZ 0
Den Haag 1 (Kromkamp og 58) Att: 7,069

Saturday, January 24

NAC 3 (Engelaar 31, Penders 49, Slot 52)
Volendam 2 (Putter 73, Ouhsaine Ouichou 81) Att: 11,190

Roda JC 2 (Anastasiou 13, Kone 33)
RKC 1 (Hoogendorp 85) Att: 12,850

Vitesse 0
Heerenveen 1 (Knopper 5) Att: 20,864

Willem II 2 (Quinn 83, Victoria 90)
Twente 3 (John 9, Victoria og 25, N'Kufo 82) Att: 13,000

Zwolle 0
RBC 3 (Lammens 22, De Graaf 70, Luijten 84) Att: 6,150

Sunday, January 25

Ajax 1 (Sonck 61)
NEC 0 Att: 49,180

Feyenoord 3 (Buffel 27, Lazovic 77, 81)
Utrecht 2 (Tanghe 22, Leitoe 26) Att: 39,800

Groningen 0
PSV 2 (Bouma 31, Vennegoor of Hesselink 36) Att: 12,334

Wednesday, January 28

AZ 0
Willem II 0 Att: 7,650

NEC 1 (Niedzielan 22)
Feyenoord 2 (Kuijt 48, Buffel 57) Att: 12,500

PSV 5 (Colin 16, De Jong 22, Vennegoor of Hesselink 25, 74, Vonlanthen 87)
Zwolle 1 (De Ridder 29) Att: 31,000

Twente 0
Vitesse 0 Att: 13,000

Utrecht 0
RBC 1 (Molenaar 82) Att: 15,000

Volendam 0
RKC 4 (Cornelisse 49, Boutahar 55, Fuchs 88, Redan 90) Att: 4,570

Saturday, January 31

PSV 3 (De Jong 45, Vennegoor of Hesselink 77, Robben 86)
Vitesse 0 Att: 32,500

RKC 1 (Redan 75)
NEC 2 (Simr 15, Demouge 36) Att: 5,000

Roda JC 3 (Anastasiou 21, Kone 25, 44)
AZ 1 (Wisse 68) Att: 13,000

Sunday, February 1

Ajax 4 (Toda og 6, Sikora 18, Sneijder 39, Mitea 78)
Den Haag 0 Att: 47,264

Feyenoord 3 (Buffel 10, 68, Kuijt 36)
Twente 2 (Polak 77, Zomer 90) Att: 42,000

Groningen 0
Volendam 1 (Buys pen 75) Att: 11,340

Willem II 1 (Caluwe 87)
NAC 1 (Elmander 62) Att: 13,200

Zwolle 1 (Takak 9)
Utrecht 1 (Chaiat 36) Att: 5,600

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	19	14	4	1	54	14	46
Ajax	18	15	1	2	46	17	46
Feyenoord	19	11	4	4	38	26	37
AZ	19	10	3	6	35	21	33
Twente	19	9	2	8	36	33	29
Heerenveen	17	9	2	6	21	19	29
Willem II	19	8	5	6	29	28	29
Roda JC	18	7	6	5	32	23	27
RBC	18	7	6	5	20	18	27
Utrecht	19	7	5	7	24	23	26
NAC	18	6	4	8	29	28	22
NEC	19	7	1	11	22	31	22
RKC	19	5	5	9	25	26	20
Groningen	18	5	5	8	22	28	20
Volendam	19	4	4	11	20	51	16
Vitesse	19	2	8	9	23	34	14
Den Haag	18	3	4	11	13	39	13
Zwolle	19	1	5	13	11	41	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS

15	Mateja Kezman (PSV)
12	Ali El Khattabi (AZ)
10	Dirk Kuijt (Feyenoord)
10	Blaise N'Kufo (Twente)

DUTCH CUP – quarter-finals

Feb 3: Sparta 0 NEC 0 (aet; Sparta 3-2 on pens).
Feb 4: PSV 0 NAC 1; Twente 3 Feyenoord 1 (aet); Utrecht 3 Heracles 2.

HUNGARY

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Balaton	16	10	2	4	19	7	32
MTK	16	7	6	3	25	15	27
Debrecen	16	8	3	5	24	14	27
Ferencvaros*	16	9	5	2	23	15	26
Pecs	16	6	5	5	17	16	23
Matav	16	6	4	6	21	22	22
Videoton	16	5	6	5	22	22	21
Ujpest	16	4	8	4	20	19	20
Gyor	16	4	4	8	17	21	16
Haladas	16	3	7	6	11	26	16
Bekescsaba	16	3	5	8	15	23	14
Zalaegerszeg	16	3	1	12	18	32	10

**6pts deducted because of a pitch invasion by Ferencvaros supporters during a game last season*

ITALY

Saturday, January 10

Chievo 0
Udinese 0 Att: 10,193

Parma 1 (Filippini 41)
Inter 0 Att: 22,302

Sunday, January 11

Empoli 2 (Di Natale 46, Vannucchi 50)
Ancona 0 Att: 3,858

Lazio 0
Brescia 1 (Di Biagio 5) Att: 44,929

Lecce 1 (Bojinov 22)
Bologna 2 (Pecchia 13, Tare 77) Att: 11,969

Milan 3 (Kaka 9, 55, Pirlo pen 71)
Reggina 1 (Torrisi 1) Att: 55,634

Perugia 0
Roma 1 (Mancini 3) Att: 18,796

Sampdoria 1 (Flachi 56)
Juventus 2 (Camoranesi 23, Conte 64) Att: 35,557

Siena 4 (Lazetic 5, Chiesa 44, Ventola 71, Morello 82)
Modena 0 Att: 10,325

Saturday, January 17

Modena 1 (Campedelli 61)
Lazio 1 (Claudio Lopez 24) Att: 13,937

Udinese 1 (Ferrari og 23)
Parma 1 (Adriano 80) Att: 15,012

Sunday, January 18

Ancona 0
Perugia 0 Att: 11,294

Bologna 3 (Signori 1, Tare 17, Nervo 43)
Chievo 1 (Santana 32) Att: 19,130

Brescia 0
Milan 1 (Pancaro 81) Att: 19,972

Inter 0
Empoli 1 (Rocchi 89) Att: 49,805

Juventus 4 (Del Piero pen 15, pen 59, 64, Trezeguet 37)
Siena 2 (Ventola pen 74, 80) Att: 30,974

Reggina 1 (Cozza 24)
Lecce 3 (Bojinov 1, 56, Chevanton 3) Att: 19,533

Roma 3 (Carew 10, Totti 60, 67)
Sampdoria 1 (Bazzani 6) Att: 51,813

Saturday, January 24

Sampdoria 2 (Bazzani 45, 47)
Reggina 0 Att: 23,280

Siena 2 (Flo 87, Menegazzo 90)
Perugia 1 (Ravanelli 6) Att: 10,679

Sunday, January 25

Chievo 3 (Malago 49, Santana 70, Sculli 81)
Brescia 1 (Caracciolo 8) Att: 14,716

Empoli 3 (Rocchi 21, 55, 62)
Juventus 3 (Trezeguet 30, 50, 75) Att: 16,188

Lecce 0
Lazio 1 (Cesar 51) Att: 10,834

Milan 5 (Shevchenko pen 62, Rui Costa 69, Tomasson pen 76, Kaka 82, 88)
Ancona 0 Att: 53,266

Modena 1 (Makinwa 41)
Inter 1 (Recoba 10) Att: 16,602

Parma 0
Bologna 0 Att: 14,251

Roma 1 (Panucci 15)
Udinese 1 (Jankulovski 88) Att: 44,882

Wednesday, January 28

Milan 2 (Kaka 38, Tomasson 54)
Siena 1 (Flo 87) Att: 54,428

Saturday, January 31

Brescia 1 (Bachini pen 43)
Roma 0 Att: 15,005

Reggina 2 (Cozza pen 51, Di Michele pen 89)
Empoli 0 Att: 18,997

Sunday, February 1

Ancona 0
Lecce 2 (Chevanton 1, Konan 61) Att: 11,287

Bologna 0
Milan 2 (Shevchenko 19, Tomasson 89) Att: 30,149

Inter 4 (Recoba 22, pen 67, Adriano 49, 79)
Siena 0 Att: 50,732

Juventus 1 (Camoranesi 10)
Chievo 0 Att: 30,078

Lazio 1 (Fiore 11)
Sampdoria 1 (Bazzani 50) Att: 46,243

Perugia 2 (Hubner 8, Ze Maria pen 42)
Parma 2 (Gilardino 35, Morfeo 38) Att: 8,835

Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 90)
Modena 0 Att: 15,194

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	19	15	3	1	37	9	48
Roma	19	13	4	2	37	9	43
Juventus	19	13	4	2	42	21	43
Inter	19	10	5	4	33	13	35
Parma	19	9	6	4	28	21	33
Lazio	19	10	3	6	27	22	33
Udinese	19	8	6	5	22	19	30
Sampdoria	19	7	7	5	23	21	28
Chievo	19	7	4	8	21	23	25
Brescia	19	5	7	7	28	32	22
Siena	19	5	6	8	27	27	21
Bologna	19	5	6	8	19	26	21
Reggina	19	4	8	7	18	30	20
Modena	19	4	6	9	14	25	18
Lecce	19	4	3	12	21	35	15
Empoli	19	3	4	12	14	35	13
Perugia	19	0	11	8	22	35	11
Ancona	19	0	5	14	7	37	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS

16	Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
12	David Trezeguet (Juventus)
11	Fabio Bazzani (Sampdoria)
11	Francesco Totti (Roma)

ITALIAN CUP – quarter-finals

1st legs
Jan 13: Udinese 0 Inter 0.
Jan 14: Lazio 2 Parma 0; Milan 2 Roma 1.
Jan 15: Perugia 1 Juventus 2.

2nd legs
Jan 20: Parma 1 Lazio 1 *Lazio 3-1 on agg.*
Jan 21: Inter 3 Udinese 1 *Inter 3-1 on agg;* Juventus 1 Perugia 0 *Juventus 3-1 on agg.*
Jan 22: Roma 1 Milan 2 *Milan 4-2 on agg.*

Semi-finals

1st legs
Feb 4: Juventus 2 Inter 2.
Feb 5: Milan 1 Lazio 2.

POLAND

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	13	10	0	3	38	17	30
Amica	13	9	2	2	24	13	29
Legia	13	7	5	1	20	10	26
Groclin	13	6	4	3	28	12	22
Gornik L	13	7	1	5	16	19	22
Gornik Z	13	5	5	3	16	13	20
Wisla P	13	6	2	5	21	21	20
Katowice	13	5	3	5	11	21	18
Odra	13	4	4	5	17	22	16
Lech	13	4	2	7	23	21	14
Polonia	13	2	5	6	10	17	11
Widzew	13	2	4	7	16	24	10
Gornik P	13	2	3	8	8	19	9
Swit	13	0	4	9	7	26	4

PORTUGAL

Friday, January 9

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Joao Pinto 31, Pedro Barbosa 42)
Guimaraes 1 (Romeu 21)

Saturday, January 10

Maritimo 0
Boavista 0

Pacos Ferreira 0
FC Porto 2 (McCarthy 15, 22)

Rio Ave 0
Nacional 0

Sunday, January 11

Alverca 1 (Rodolfo Lima 7)
Moreirense 2 (Lito pen 70, Demetrios 80)

Estrela Amadora 2 (Julio Cesar 74, Lula 90)
Academica 1 (Dionattan 88)

Sporting Braga 2 (Pena 64, Wender pen 81)
Belenenses 1 (Antchouet 46)

Uniao Leiria 3 (Luis Filipe 19, Douala 42, 84)
Benfica 3 (Sokota 29, Nuno Gomes 58, 79)

Monday, January 12

Beira Mar 1 (Wijnhard pen 76)
Gil Vicente 1 (Josiesley Ferreira 38)

Friday, January 16

Beira Mar 2 (Zeman 55, Joao Paulo 83)
Maritimo 2 (Wenio 30, Alan 80)

Saturday, January 17

Sporting Braga 0
FC Porto 3 (Maniche 14, Maciel 21, McCarthy 45)

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Liedson 42, Pedro Barbosa 90)
Academica 0

Sunday, January 18

Alverca 0
Gil Vicente 0

Benfica 3 (Sokota 18, 68, Argel 24)
Boavista 2 (Ricardo Sousa 27, Anunciacao 38)

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Junior pen 85)
Nacional 1 (Serginho Baiano 69)

Rio Ave 1 (Niquinha 38)
Moreirense 1 (Demetrios 42)

Monday, January 19

Estrela Amadora 2 (Julio Cesar pen 87, 90)
Belenenses 2 (Leonardo 34, Hugo Carreira og 43)

Uniao Leiria 0
Guimaraes 0

Friday, January 23

Maritimo 1 (Alan 83)
Alverca 1 (Alex Afonso 30)

Saturday, January 24

Belenenses 1 (Marco Paulo 30)
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Sa Pinto 33, Joao Pinto 68, Liedson 90)

FC Porto 2 (McCarthy 30, 45)
Estrela Amadora 0

Sunday, January 25

Academica 1 (Marcelo 67)
Uniao Leiria 2 (Gabriel 34, Douala 40)

Gil Vicente 1 (Joslesley Ferreira 47)
Rio Ave 2 (Evandro 61, Naciri 77)

Guimaraes 0
Benfica 1 (Fernando Aguiar 90)

Moreirense 1 (Lito pen 52)
Pacos Ferreira 0

Nacional 5 (Rossato 22, 50, 72, Adriano 45, 90)
Sporting Braga 1 (Wender 66)

Monday, January 26

Boavista 1 (Ricardo Sousa 85)
Beira Mar 0

Friday, January 30

Sporting Braga 1 (Paulo Sergio 58)
Moreirense 1 (Paulo Jorge og 24)

Saturday, January 31

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Pedro Barbosa pen 69)
FC Porto 1 (Jorge Costa 9)

Sunday, February 1

Estrela Amadora 0
Nacional 1 (Adriano 22)

Guimaraes 1 (Rafael 64)
Boavista 1 (Ricardo Sousa pen 58)

Pacos Ferreira 3 (Ze Manuel 20, 79, Manduca 78)
Gil Vicente 2 (Julio Cesar Pinheiro og 28, Yuri 43)

Rio Ave 2 (Valente 39, Evandro 58)
Maritimo 1 (Dinda 89)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Fredy 90)
Belenenses 1 (Antchouet 65)

Monday, February 2

Alverca 1 (Ronald Garcia 75)
Beira Mar 2 (Wijnhard pen 69, Sandro 90)

Tuesday, February 3

Benfica 2 (Zahovic 27, Geovanni 66)
Academica 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	20	16	4	0	45	12	52
Sporting Lisbon	20	15	2	3	39	19	47
Benfica	20	13	4	3	40	19	43
Beira Mar	20	10	4	6	30	24	34
Sporting Braga	20	10	4	6	22	25	34
Boavista	20	8	7	5	19	15	31
Nacional	20	9	3	8	33	20	30
Maritimo	20	7	9	4	22	20	30
Rio Ave	20	7	7	6	23	18	28
Moreirense	20	6	6	8	17	24	24
Uniao Leiria	20	6	5	9	24	32	23
Gil Vicente	20	5	7	8	28	26	22
Belenenses	20	4	8	8	25	35	20
Alverca	20	5	4	11	20	27	19
Pacos Ferreira	20	5	2	13	13	31	17
Guimaraes	20	3	7	10	19	27	16
Academica	20	4	3	13	15	27	15
Estrela Amadora	20	3	2	15	14	47	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Derlei (FC Porto)
12 Benni McCarthy (FC Porto)
11 Adriano (Nacional)
10 Ricardo Sousa (Boavista)

PORTUGUESE CUP – last 16

Jan 14: Belenenses 4 Santo Antonio 0; Estoril 1 Setubal 0; Marco 0 Penafiel 0; Moreirense 1 Sporting Braga 2; Rio Ave 2 Portimonense 1; Uniao Leiria 1 Nacional 2.
Jan 21: FC Porto 4 Vilafranquense 0.
Bye: Benfica

ROMANIA

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	15	10	2	3	38	19	32
Steaua	15	9	5	1	23	6	32
Rapid	15	8	5	2	25	15	29
U Craiova	15	6	5	4	18	15	23
Apulum	15	6	4	5	16	21	22
Otelul	15	5	5	5	13	13	20
Poli AEK	15	4	8	3	14	15	20
Farul	15	5	4	6	21	23	19
National	15	5	4	6	18	20	19
Brasov	15	5	3	7	20	27	18
Bacau	15	4	5	6	18	27	17
Arges	15	4	4	7	17	16	16
Gloria	15	4	4	7	18	26	16
Oradea	15	4	3	8	21	21	15
Ceahlaul	15	4	3	8	16	28	15
Petrolul	15	3	4	8	16	20	13

SCOTLAND

Saturday, January 17

Dundee Utd 3 (Robson 20, Miller 85, Dodds pen 90)
Aberdeen 2 (Booth pen 55, Archibald og 65) Att: 6,666

Kilmarnock 1 (McSwegan pen 29)
Dunfermline 1 (Crawford 63) Att: 5,715

Livingston 1 (Makel 26)
Hibernian 0 Att: 5,621

Partick 1 (Rowson 31)
Dundee 2 (Novo 85, Smith 89) Att: 4,690

Rangers 1 (Arveladze 82)
Motherwell 0 Att: 48,925

Sunday, January 18

Hearts 0
Celtic 1 (Petrov 27) Att: 13,753

Saturday, January 24

Aberdeen 1 (Tosh 62)
Celtic 3 (Petrov 30, Larsson 43, Pearson 58) Att: 16,452

Dunfermline 1 (Derek Young 73)
Motherwell 0 Att: 5,270

Hearts 2 (Wyness 42, 78)
Partick 0 Att: 10,264

Kilmarnock 0
Hibernian 2 (Brown 48, O'Connor 50) Att: 5,571

Rangers 1 (Nerlinger 13)
Livingston 0 Att: 48,638

Sunday, January 25

Dundee 2 (Novo 48, Lovell 70)
Dundee Utd 1 (Dodds pen 44) Att: 10,747

Saturday, January 31

Celtic 5 (Agathe 55, Hartson 65, 89, Larsson 76, Pearson 77)
Kilmarnock 1 (Skora 84) Att: 59,138

Dundee Utd 1 (McIntyre 57)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 5,564

Hibernian 1 (Riordan pen 69)
Dundee 1 (Fotheringham 44) Att: 8,023

Sunday, February 1

Partick 0
Rangers 1 (Lovenkrands 76) Att: 8,220

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	22	21	1	0	71	9	64
Rangers	22	17	2	3	46	18	53
Hearts	21	11	3	7	30	24	36
Dunfermline	22	9	7	6	27	29	34
Livingston	21	6	8	7	22	23	26
Hibernian	22	7	5	10	23	35	26
Dundee Utd	22	7	5	10	23	36	26
Dundee	22	6	7	9	26	30	25
Motherwell	21	6	6	9	20	24	24
Kilmarnock	22	6	3	13	26	49	21
Aberdeen	21	5	4	12	26	40	19
Partick	22	2	3	17	20	43	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)
13 Nacho Novo (Dundee)
13 Chris Sutton (Celtic)
12 Stevie Crawford (Dunfermline)

SCOTTISH CUP – 3rd rnd (last 32)

Jan 10: Aberdeen 0 Dundee 0; Arbroath 1 Spartans 4; Ayr 1 Falkirk 2; Celtic 2 Ross County 0; Clyde 3 Gretna 0; Dunfermline 3 Dundee Utd 1; East Fife 0 Queen of the South 1; Hamilton 2 Cowdenbeath 0; Hearts 2 Berwick 0; Hibernian 0 Rangers 2; Inverness CT 5 Brechin 1; Livingston 1 Montrose 0; Morton 0 Partick 3; Raith 1 Kilmarnock 3; St Johnstone 0 Motherwell 3; St Mirren 2 Airdrie 0.

3rd rnd replay
Jan 21: Dundee 2 Aberdeen 3.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	15	12	1	2	31	6	37
Partizan	15	11	1	3	33	15	34
Sartid	15	10	2	3	31	18	32
Zeleznik	15	10	1	4	23	9	31
OFK	15	8	4	3	20	15	28
Hajduk K	15	7	3	5	15	10	24
Obilic	15	6	2	7	18	16	20
Zeta	15	5	4	6	18	20	19
Buducnost	15	6	1	8	19	27	19
Zemun	15	5	3	7	14	17	18
Sutjeska	15	5	2	8	16	18	17
Vojvodina	15	3	6	6	14	20	15
Borac	15	3	4	8	16	31	13
Radnicki O	15	1	8	6	10	21	11
Kom Podgorica	15	3	1	11	14	35	10
Napredak	15	2	3	10	14	28	9

SPAIN

Saturday, January 10

Albacete 0
Valencia 1 (Jorge Lopez pen 8) Att: 17,300

Mallorca 2 (Bruggink 12, pen 45)
Celta Vigo 4 (Jose Ignacio 16, Jesuli 71, Luccin pen 85, Milosevic 90) Att: 12,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Karpin 60)
Real Madrid 0 Att: 39,316

Sunday, January 11

Atletico Madrid 3 (Fernando Torres 73, pen 82, Paunovic 88)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 35,000

Barcelona 3 (Saviola 24, Ronaldinho pen 45, Xavi 66)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 55,876

Betis 3 (Alfonso 8, Joaquin 48, 60)
Malaga 0 Att: 35,000

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Luque 42)
Racing Santander 1 (Javi Guerrero 80) Att: 26,000

Murcia 0
Espanyol 1 (Maxi Rodriguez 10) Att: 12,000

Osasuna 1 (Pablo Garcia 83)
Sevilla 1 (Julio Baptista 48) Att: 15,029

Villarreal 3 (Jose Mari 39, Victor 72, Roger 84)
Valladolid 1 (Makukula 64) Att: 17,000

Saturday, January 17

Barcelona 1 (Kluivert 63)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Gurpegi 86) Att: 57,659

Murcia 2 (Quintana 69, Karanka 80)
Celta Vigo 2 (Luccin 7, Milosevic 45) Att: 9,000

Valladolid 0
Valencia 0 Att: 13,200

Sunday, January 18

Atletico Madrid 2 (Fernando Torres 43, Nikolaidis 70)
Sevilla 1 (Reyes pen 75) Att: 55,000

Betis 1 (Joaquin 33)
Real Madrid 1 (Ronaldo 59) Att: 45,000

Deportivo La Coruna 4 (Diego Tristan 23, 75, Valeron 51, Sergio 85)
Zaragoza 1 (Valeron og 5) Att: 21,000

Mallorca 1 (Colsa 47)
Racing Santander 1 (Regueiro 74) Att: 15,000

Osasuna 1 (Aloisi 34)
Albacete 1 (Viaud 6) Att: 13,615

Real Sociedad 3 (Karpin pen 7, Gabilondo 85, Nihat 88)
Espanyol 1 (Cruyff 90) Att: 24,500

Villarreal 2 (Arruabarrena 67, Anderson 83)
Malaga 0 Att: 16,000

Saturday, January 24

Albacete 1 (Lequi og 59)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Nano 31) Att: 17,000

Real Madrid 2 (Solari 15, Ronaldo 54)
Villarreal 1 (Ballesteros 86) Att: 80,000

Sunday, January 25

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Yeste 50)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 30,000

Celta Vigo 2 (Gustavo Lopez 1, Luccin pen 51)
Real Sociedad 5 (Kovacevic 23, Milosevic og 42, Xabi Alonso 60, Nihat 71, 72) Att: 18,000

Espanyol 1 (Tamudo pen 63)
Betis 2 (Mingo 9, Fernando pen 30) Att: 18,600

Malaga 2 (Salva 23, 78)
Valladolid 3 (Oscar 40, 68, Julio Cesar 76) Att: 22,000

Racing Santander 3 (Javi Guerrero 33, 72, 89)
Murcia 2 (Esnaider 43, Karanka 87) Att: 12,153

Sevilla 0
Barcelona 1 (Kluivert 31) Att: 40,000

Valencia 0
Osasuna 1 (Pellegrino og 45) Att: 45,000

Zaragoza 1 (Ponzio 66)
Mallorca 3 (Delibasic 40, Bruggink 43, Nene 90) Att: 28,000

Saturday, January 31

Atletico Madrid 1 (Nikolaidis 90)
Osasuna 1 (Valdo 25) Att: 40,000

Betis 1 (Lembo 36)
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 30,000

Malaga 1 (Salva 73)
Valencia 6 (Mista 4, Ricardo Oliveira 15, 50, 58, Marchena 48, Albelda 62) Att: 21,000

Sunday, February 1

Barcelona 5 (Xavi 15, Saviola 50, Ricardo Quaresma 53, Davids 54, Luis Enrique 90)
Albacete 0 Att: 49,619

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Diego Tristan pen 29)
Sevilla 0 Att: 30,900

Mallorca 1 (Gurpegi og 38)
Athletic Bilbao 3 (Yeste 18, Etxeberría 57, Franco og 85) Att: 15,000

Murcia 1 (Richi 35)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 11,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Karpin pen 61)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 26,209

Valladolid 2 (Oscar 33, 42)
Real Madrid 3 (Ronaldo 48, 90, Figo pen 61) Att: 25,200

Villarreal 0
Espanyol 1 (Raducanu 89) Att: 17,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	22	15	4	3	43	23	49
Valencia	22	14	5	3	42	16	47
Dep La Coruna	22	13	4	5	37	17	43
Atletico Madrid	22	10	6	6	30	25	36
Barcelona	22	9	7	6	33	26	34
Osasuna	22	8	10	4	23	17	34
Villarreal	22	9	6	7	28	25	33
Athletic Bilbao	22	9	6	7	28	26	33
Racing Santander	22	8	6	8	28	30	30
Real Sociedad	22	8	6	8	28	32	30
Betis	22	7	8	7	28	24	29
Valladolid	22	7	8	7	28	31	29
Mallorca	22	8	3	11	28	39	27
Malaga	22	8	2	12	27	36	26
Sevilla	22	6	7	9	28	26	25
Albacete	22	6	4	12	23	32	22
Celta Vigo	22	4	9	9	30	40	21
Zaragoza	22	5	5	12	20	32	20
Espanyol	22	5	2	15	18	38	17
Murcia	22	2	10	10	20	35	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
12 Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)
12 Salva (Malaga)
11 Mista (Valencia)

SPANISH CUP – last 16

1st legs
Jan 6: Atletico Madrid 0 Deportivo La Coruna 0.
Jan 7: Alaves 0 Valladolid 0; Eibar 1 Real Madrid 1; Malaga 0 Celta Vigo 1; Valencia 2 Osasuna 2; Zaragoza 3 Betis 1.
Jan 8: Levante 1 Barcelona 0; Villarreal 1 Sevilla 3.

2nd legs
Jan 13: Real Madrid 2 Eibar 0 *Real Madrid 3-1 on agg.*
Jan 14: Barcelona 3 Levante 1 *Barcelona 3-2 on agg*; Betis 1 Zaragoza 1 *Zaragoza 4-2 on agg*; Celta Vigo 2 Malaga 2 *Celta 3-2 on agg*; Osasuna 0 Valencia 2 *Valencia 4-2 on agg*; Valladolid 1 Alaves 1 *Agg 1-1. Alaves on away goals.*
Jan 15: Deportivo La Coruna 1 Atletico Madrid 1 *Agg 1-1. Atletico on away goals*; Sevilla 0 Villarreal 2 *Agg 3-3. Sevilla on away goals.*

Quarter-finals

1st legs
Jan 21: Real Madrid 3 Valencia 0; Sevilla 4 Atletico Madrid 0.
Jan 22: Alaves 4 Celta Vigo 2; Barcelona 0 Zaragoza 1.

2nd legs
Jan 28: Atletico Madrid 1 Sevilla 2 *Sevilla 6-1 on agg*; Celta Vigo 1 Alaves 0 *Alaves 4-3 on agg*; Valencia 1 Real Madrid 2 *Real Madrid 5-1 on agg.*
Jan 29: Zaragoza 1 Barcelona 1 *Zaragoza 2-1 on agg.*

Semi-finals

1st legs
Feb 4: Real Madrid 2 Sevilla 0.
Feb 5: Alaves 1 Zaragoza 1.

SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	18	17	1	0	56	16	52
Young Boys	18	12	2	4	39	25	38
Servette	18	9	4	5	33	29	31
Aarau	18	5	7	6	29	32	22
Thun	18	5	6	7	20	32	21
St Gallen	18	5	5	8	24	32	20
Grasshopper	18	6	2	10	32	41	20
Wil 1900	18	4	5	9	23	35	17
Neuchatel X	18	4	4	10	19	27	16
Zurich	18	4	2	12	25	31	14

TURKEY

Jan 18: Fenerbahce 4 Rizespor 1.
Jan 23: Diyarbakirspor 0 Galatasaray 0.
Jan 24: Denizlispor 1 Sebatspor 2.
Jan 25: Ankaragucu 4 Rizespor 1; Gaziantepspor 3 Bursaspor 2; Istanbulspor 0 Fenerbahce 1; Elazigspor 1 Genclerbirligi 1; Malatyaspor 2 Adanaspor 0; Besiktas 1 Samsunspor 4; Trabzonspor 0 Konyaspor 3.
Jan 31: Galatasaray 3 Gaziantepspor 0.
Feb 1: Samsunspor 3 Ankaragucu 2; Bursaspor 0 Besiktas 1; Rizespor 1 Denizlispor 2; Genclerbirligi 3 Diyarbakirspor 4; Konyaspor 2 Elazigspor 0; Adanaspor 1 Istanbulspor 1; Sebatspor 2 Malatyaspor 2; Fenerbahce 3 Trabzonspor 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	19	14	4	1	44	19	46
Fenerbahce	19	12	5	2	44	23	41
Trabzonspor	19	10	4	5	30	25	34
Denizlispor	19	10	3	6	34	23	33
Galatasaray	19	9	6	4	30	23	33
Malatyaspor	19	8	7	4	31	21	31
Diyarbakirspor	19	8	5	6	29	25	29
Samsunspor	19	8	5	6	32	31	29
Gaziantepspor	19	9	2	8	26	27	29
Genclerbirligi	19	8	3	8	35	25	27
Konyaspor	19	5	9	5	28	29	24
Istanbulspor	19	6	4	9	28	27	22
Ankaragucu	19	6	4	9	28	34	22
Sebatspor	19	4	6	9	22	31	18
Rizespor	19	4	3	12	17	36	15
Bursaspor	19	2	7	10	16	26	13
Adanaspor	19	3	3	13	16	40	12
Elazigspor	19	2	6	11	20	45	12

UKRAINE

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	15	12	3	0	33	10	39
Dynamo	15	11	3	1	34	10	36
Dnipro	15	9	3	3	27	12	30
Metalurh D	15	7	5	3	25	18	26
Chornomorets	15	5	8	2	19	17	23
Obolon	15	6	4	5	16	17	22
Arsenal	15	6	3	6	20	19	21
Illichivets	15	4	7	4	17	22	19
Karpaty	15	4	4	7	16	20	16
Metalurh Z	15	4	4	7	13	19	16
Borysfen	15	4	3	8	8	16	15
Kryvbas	15	3	5	7	10	18	14
Vorskla	15	3	5	7	12	21	14
Volyn	15	3	3	9	11	23	12
Tavriya	15	2	5	8	7	15	11
Zirka	15	2	5	8	7	18	11

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Group 1

Feb 5 - Sao Caetano do Sul
Sao Caetano (Bra) 4 (Somalia 16, Gilberto 44, Marcinho 52, Anderson Lima 57)
The Strongest (Bol) 2 (V Ferreira 51, Mendez 71)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Marcinho (Sao Caetano) 60min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Caetano	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
America	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Penarol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Strongest	1	0	0	1	2	4	0

Feb 11: America (Mex) v Penarol (Uru)
Feb 19: The Strongest v America
Mar 2: Penarol v Sao Caetano
Mar 11: Sao Caetano v America
Mar 16: Penarol v The Strongest
Mar 17: America v Sao Caetano
Mar 23: The Strongest v Penarol
Apr 8: Sao Caetano v Penarol
Apr 8: America v The Strongest
Apr 15: The Strongest v Sao Caetano
Apr 15: Penarol v America

Group 2

Feb 10: Velez Sarsfield (Arg) v Maracaibo (Ven)
Feb 19: Once Caldas (Col) v Fenix (Uru)
Feb 25: Maracaibo v Once Caldas
Feb 25: Fenix v Velez Sarsfield
Mar 3: Fenix v Maracaibo
Mar 9: Velez Sarsfield v Once Caldas
Mar 17: Once Caldas v Velez Sarsfield
Mar 18: Maracaibo v Fenix
Apr 6: Velez Sarsfield v Fenix
Apr 6: Once Caldas v Maracaibo
Apr 22: Maracaibo v Velez Sarsfield
Apr 22: Fenix v Once Caldas

Group 3

Feb 3 - Torreon
Santos Laguna (Mex) 2 (Altamirano 1, Noriega 8)
U de Concepcion (Chl) 2 (Viveros 44, Figueroa 81)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Rivera (Per)

Feb 4 - Belo Horizonte
Cruzeiro (Bra) 3 (Alex pen 18, Felipe Melo 54, Jussie 68)
Caracas (Ven) 1 (Rivas pen 38)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Vazquez (Uru)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Santos Laguna	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
U de Concepcion	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Caracas	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Feb 10: U de Concepcion v Cruzeiro
Feb 12: Caracas v Santos Laguna
Feb 17: Cruzeiro v Santos Laguna
Feb 24: U de Concepcion v Caracas
Mar 2: Caracas v U de Concepcion
Mar 10: Santos Laguna v Cruzeiro
Mar 16: Santos Laguna v Caracas
Mar 17: Cruzeiro v U de Concepcion
Apr 15: Caracas v Cruzeiro
Apr 15: U de Concepcion v Santos Laguna

Group 4

Feb 10: Cobreloa (Chl) v LDU Quito (Ecu)
Feb 11: Alianza Lima (Per) v Sao Paulo (Bra)
Feb 25: LDU Quito v Alianza Lima
Feb 26: Sao Paulo v Cobreloa
Mar 4: LDU Quito v Sao Paulo
Mar 4: Alianza Lima v Cobreloa
Mar 10: Cobreloa v Alianza Lima
Mar 10: Sao Paulo v LDU Quito
Mar 24: Cobreloa v Sao Paulo
Mar 25: Alianza Lima v LDU Quito
Apr 7: Sao Paulo v Alianza Lima
Apr 7: LDU Quito v Cobreloa

Group 5

Feb 12: El Nacional (Ecu) v Nacional (Uru)
Feb 12: Independiente (Arg) v Cienciano (Per)
Feb 24: Nacional v Independiente
Feb 26: Cienciano v El Nacional
Mar 2: Independiente v El Nacional
Mar 4: Nacional v Cienciano
Mar 11: Cienciano v Nacional
Mar 16: El Nacional v Independiente
Mar 23: El Nacional v Cienciano
Mar 25: Independiente v Nacional
Apr 20: Cienciano v Independiente
Apr 20: Nacional v El Nacional

Group 6

Feb 3 - Asuncion
Libertad (Par) 0
Tolima (Col) 0
Ref: Pena (Bra)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tolima	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dep Tachira	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
River Plate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Feb 11: Deportivo Tachira (Ven) v River Plate (Arg)
Feb 24: Tolima v Deportivo Tachira
Feb 25: River Plate v Libertad
Mar 9: Deportivo Tachira v Libertad
Mar 11: Tolima v River Plate
Mar 17: Libertad v Deportivo Tachira
Mar 18: River Plate v Tolima
Apr 7: Libertad v River Plate
Apr 8: Deportivo Tachira v Tolima
Apr 14: River Plate v Deportivo Tachira
Apr 14: Tolima v Libertad

Group 7

Feb 4 - Asuncion
Guarani (Par) 0
Barcelona (Ecu) 0
Ref: Almeida (Bra)

Feb 5 - Cochabamba
Jorge Wilstermann (Bol) 2 (Tulio 37, Marin 75)
Santos (Bra) 3 (Basilio 14, 24, Alex 86)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Barcelona	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Guarani	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
J Wilstermann	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Feb 10: Barcelona v Jorge Wilstermann
Feb 18: Santos v Guarani
Mar 3: Jorge Wilstermann v Guarani
Mar 3: Barcelona v Santos
Mar 11: Santos v Barcelona
Mar 18: Guarani v Jorge Wilstermann
Mar 24: Jorge Wilstermann v Barcelona
Mar 25: Guarani v Santos
Apr 14: Santos v Jorge Wilstermann
Apr 14: Barcelona v Guarani

Group 8

Feb 3 - Santiago
Colo Colo (Chl) 2 (Neira 43, 88)
Deportivo Cali (Col) 3 (Candelo 24, Dominguez 42, C Castillo 55)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Boca Juniors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bolivar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colo Colo	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Feb 18: Bolivar (Bol) v Boca Juniors (Arg)
Mar 2: Deportivo Cali v Bolivar
Mar 3: Boca Juniors v Colo Colo
Mar 10: Deportivo Cali v Boca Juniors
Mar 18: Bolivar v Colo Colo
Mar 24: Boca Juniors v Deportivo Cali
Mar 25: Colo Colo v Bolivar
Apr 7: Bolivar v Deportivo Cali
Apr 8: Colo Colo v Boca Juniors
Apr 21: Boca Juniors v Bolivar
Apr 21: Deportivo Cali v Colo Colo

Group 9

Feb 5 - Asuncion
Olimpia (Par) 0
Rosario Central (Arg) 2 (Belloso 63, Herrera 78)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosario Central	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Coritiba	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sporting Cristal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Olimpia	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

Feb 10: Sporting Cristal (Per) v Coritiba (Bra)
Feb 17: Coritiba v Olimpia
Feb 26: Rosario Central v Sporting Cristal
Mar 4: Rosario Central v Coritiba
Mar 9: Sporting Cristal v Olimpia
Mar 10: Coritiba v Rosario Central
Mar 16: Olimpia v Sporting Cristal
Mar 23: Sporting Cristal v Rosario Central
Apr 6: Olimpia v Coritiba
Apr 13: Coritiba v Sporting Cristal
Apr 13: Rosario Central v Olimpia

Group winners and the five best runners-up qualify for second round; other four runners-up play off in two head-to-head ties for last two second round berths

PERU

OVERALL 2003 CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFF

Jan 31 - Estadio Nacional, Lima
Alianza Lima 2 (Silva 33, Farfan 91)
Sporting Cristal 1 (Soto 27)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 18: Caracas 3 Dep Tachira 1; Maracaibo 1 Monagas 1; Mineros Guayana 1 Trujillanos 1; Carabobo 1 Estudiantes 0.
Jan 21: El Vigia 2 Maracaibo 0.
Jan 25: El Vigia 1 Caracas 2; Ital-Chacao 1 Mineros Guayana 1; Trujillanos 0 Carabobo 0; Estudiantes 2 Maracaibo 2; Monagas 2 Dep Tachira 3.
Jan 28: El Vigia 1 Ital-Chacao 2; Estudiantes 0 Caracas 4.
Jan 31: Caracas 2 Monagas 0.
Feb 1: Dep Tachira 2 Estudiantes 1; Maracaibo 0 Trujillanos 0; Carabobo 1 Ital-Chacao 2; Mineros Guayana 2 El Vigia 0.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	4	4	0	0	11	2	12
Ital-Chacao	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Dep Tachira	3	2	0	1	6	6	6
Mineros Guayana	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Carabobo	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Trujillanos	3	0	3	0	1	1	3
El Vigia	4	1	0	3	4	6	3
Maracaibo	4	0	3	1	3	5	3
Monagas	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Estudiantes	4	0	1	3	3	9	1

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Jan 17: Jaguares 4 Tigres 2; Morelia 1 Irapuato 1; Monterrey 0 Cruz Azul 0; San Luis 0 Necaxa 2; Atlas 1 Puebla 1.
Jan 18: Pachuca 2 Gallos Blancos 2; America 1 Pumas UNAM 1; Atlante 0 Toluca 1; Tecos UAG 3 Veracruz 2; Santos 0 Guadalajara 1.
Jan 24: Toluca 2 Jaguares 1; Veracruz 1 Monterrey 1; Cruz Azul 1 America 1; Tigres 3 Pachuca 3; Guadalajara 1 Atlante 0; Necaxa 2 Santos 2.
Jan 25: Gallos Blancos 2 Morelia 2; Pumas UNAM 3 Atlas 0; Irapuato 2 Tecos UAG 3; Puebla 1 San Luis 2.
Jan 31: Jaguares 2 Guadalajara 1; Monterrey 3 Tecos UAG 0; Morelia 1 Tigres 2; San Luis 0 Pumas UNAM 0; Atlas 0 Cruz Azul 2.
Feb 1: Gallos Blancos 1 Irapuato 1; America 3 Veracruz 2; Pachuca 1 Toluca 0; Atlante 3 Necaxa 1; Santos 2 Puebla 0.

MEXICO – CLOSING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Monterrey	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Pachuca	3	1	2	0	6	5	5
Puebla	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Atlas	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jaguares	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Cruz Azul	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Tigres	3	1	1	1	7	8	4
San Luis	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Morelia	3	0	2	1	4	5	2

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tecos UAG	3	2	0	1	6	7	6
Pumas UNAM	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
America	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Santos	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Gallos Blancos	3	0	3	0	5	5	3

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Necaxa	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
Atlante	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Irapuato	3	0	2	1	4	5	2
Veracruz	3	0	1	2	5	7	1

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st rnd draw

Stade Tamponnaise (Reu) v AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs)
SuperSport United (SAf) v Civics (Nam)
St George (Eth) v Al Hilal (Sud)
Eco Redipharm Toamasina (Mad) v St Michel United (Sey)
Matlama (Les) v Orlando Pirates (SAf)
Simba SC (Tan) v Zanaco (Zam)
Bakili Bullets (Mwi) v SC Villa (Uga)
APR FC (Rwa) v Anseba SC (Eri)
Dragons l'Oueme (Ben) v AS Douanes (Tog)
Al Ittihad (Lby) v Sahel SC (Ngr)
St Michel Oueneze (Con) v US Bitam (Gab)
ASFA Yennenga (BuF) v Julius Berger (Nig)
Asante Kotoko (Gha) v AS Tempete Mocaf (CAR)
Armed Forces (Gam) v Jeanne d'Arc (Sen)
AS Vita Club (DRC) v Ulinzi Stars (Ken)
Stade Malien (Mli) v Hearts of Oak (Gha)
AS Aviacao (Ang) v SC Cimenterie Lukala (DRC)
Hassania Agadir (Mor) v ASC NASR Sebkha (Mra).
ASFAG (Gui) v Diaraf Dakar (Sen)
AmaZulu (Zim) v Maxaquene (Moz)
Petro Atletico (Ang) v Atletico Malabo (EqG)
1st legs, March 5-7; 2nd legs, March 19-21

2nd rnd draw

Stade Tamponnaise/AS Port Louis 2000 v SuperSport United/Civics
Al Ahly (Egy) v St George/Al Hilal
Eco Redipharm Toamasina/St Michel United v Matlama/Orlando Pirates
Simba SC/Zanaco v Bakili Bullets/SC Villa
Zamalek (Egy) v APR FC/Anseba SC
Africa Sports (IvC) v Dragons l'Oueme/AS Douanes
Esperance (Tun) v Al Ittihad/Sahel SC
Cotonsport (Cam) v St Michel Oueneze/US Bitam
USM Alger (Alg) v ASFA Yennenga/Julius Berger
ASEC Abidjan (IvC) v Asante Kotoko/AS Tempete Mocaf
Raja Casablanca (Mor) v Armed Forces/Jeanne d'Arc
Canon Yaounde (Cam) v AS Vita Club/Ulinzi Stars
Stade Malien/Hearts of Oak v AS Aviacao/SC Cimenterie Lukala
Etoile Sahel (Tun) v Hassania Agadir/ASC NASR Sebkha
Enyimba (Nig) v ASFAG/Diaraf Dakar
AmaZulu/Maxaquene v Petro Atletico/Atletico Malabo
1st legs, April 9-11; 2nd legs, April 23-25

AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP

1st rnd draw

Stade Tunisien (Tun) v ASC Thies (Sen)
Olympic Real Bangui (CAR) v Petro Huambo (Ang)
Saint Louis (Sey) v Leopards Transfoot (Mad)
Ferroviario (Moz) v Wits University (SAf)
Kiyovu Sports (Rwa) v US Mbila Nzami (Gab)
Chemelil Sugar (Ken) v Mtibwa Sugar (Tan)
Savanne SC (Mrs) v Dynamos (Zim)
Al Merreikh (Sud) v Power Dynamos (Zam)
Express FC (Uga) v Coffee FC (Eth)
Diables Noirs (Con) v Deportivo Mongomo (EqG)
Etoile Filante (BuF) v Dynamic Togolais Lome (Tog)
Mogas '90 (Ben) v ANASSR (Lby)
ASC Entente (Mra) v CS Etoile Guinea (Gui)
Djoliba (Mli) v Wallidan (Gam)
Omnisport Bouafle (IvC) v Olympic FC (Ngr)
1st legs, March 5-7; 2nd legs, March 19-21

2nd rnd draw

InterClube (Ang) v AS Douanes (Sen)
PWD Bamenda (Cam) v TP Mazembe Englebert (DRC)
Ismaili (Egy) v Stade Tunisien/ASC Thies
Real Bangui/Petro Huambo v Liberty Pros (Gha)
Saint Louis/Leopards Transfoot v Ferroviario/Wits University
Kiyovu Sports/US Mbila Nzami v Sable Batie (Cam)
Chemelil Sugar/Mtibwa Sugar v Santos (SAf)
Savanne SC/Dynamos v King Faisal Babies (Gha)
Al Merreikh/Power Dynamos v DC Motema Pembe (DRC)
Express FC/Coffee FC v Lobi Stars (Nig)
Diables Noirs/Dep. Mongomo v Stella Abidjan (IvC)
Etoile Filante/Dynamic Togolais v Wydad Casablanca (Mor)
Mogas '90/ANASSR v Enugu Rangers (Nig)
Entente/Etoile Guinea v Chabab Belouizdad (Alg)
Djoliba/Wallidan v Club Africain (Tun)
Royal Armed Forces (Mor) v Omnisport Bouafle/Olympic FC
1st legs, April 9-11; 2nd legs, April 23-25

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Draw

Group A: Zob-Ahan (Irn), Al Riffa (Bhn), Qatar Sports Club (Qat), Pakhtakor (Uzb).
Group B: Al Wahda (UAE), Al Qadisiya (Kuw), Air Force (Irq), Al Sadd (Qat).
Group C: Al Sharjah (UAE), Al Hilal (Sau), Al Ahli (Bhn), Police (Irq).
Group D: Sepahan (Irn), Al Arabi (Kuw), Al Ittihad (Sau), Neftchi (Uzb).
Group E: Chonbuk Motors (SKo), Shanghai Shenhua (Chn), BEC Tero Sasana (Tha), Jubilo Iwata (Jap).
Group F: Hoang Anh Gia Lai (Vie), Dalian Shide (Chn), Krung Thai Bank (Tha), PSM Makassar (Ins).
Group G: Binh Dinh (Vie), Songnam Ilhwa Chunma (SKo), Persik Kediri (Ins), Yokohama F Marinos (Jap).
Group winners qualify for quarter-finals
Bye: Al Ain (UAE; holders)
Group matchdays: Feb 11, Feb 25, Apr 7, Apr 21, May 5, May 19
Quarter-finals
1st legs, Sep 15; 2nd legs, Sep 22
Semi-finals
1st legs, Oct 20; 2nd legs, Oct 27
Final
1st leg, Nov 24; 2nd leg, Dec 1

AFC CUP

Draw

Group A: Nejmeh (Leb), Muktijoddah (Ban), Nisa (Tkm), Al Sha'ab Ibb (Yem).
Group B: Mahindra United (Ind), Al Wahda Sanaa (Yem), Al Wahda (Syr), Dhofar (Oma).
Group C: Olympic Beirut (Leb), Mohammedan (Ban), Nebitchi (Tkm), Al Jaish (Syr).
Group D: Perak (Mly), Happy Valley (HK), Home United (Sin), Valencia (Mdv).
Group E: Negri Sembilan (Mly), East Bengal (Ind), Geylang United (Sin), Island FC (Mdv).
Group winners and the three best runners-up qualify for quarter-finals. Group games start Feb 11

Fergie under fire

I read with great interest the article on Alex Ferguson ('No one likes me, I don't care', February 2004). However, as a football connoisseur, I would like to add some points:

a) I have never considered Ferguson to be a coach, just a football professional who went into management with an institution that provides him plenty of funds to acquire players that Manchester United require. But I recognise his ability to know what players the team must buy.

b) I know of very few players that he himself has developed.

c) He is such a bad technical director that he cannot even teach manners to his players.

d) Ferguson's true capabilities as a coach were demonstrated at the Mexico 86 World Cup when he directed the Scottish team, and they were eliminated in the first round.

e) Ferguson is one of the main reasons that English football has stagnated and has not achieved any success (at national team level) for 37 years, to the point now that the FA appointed a foreign coach for its national team, reflecting the current reality of English football.

Luciano (Lou) Castro, Melbourne, Florida, USA

Gavin Hamilton replies: Whether or not you like his style, Alex Ferguson has been a spectacularly successful manager in British football. The problem he and United now face is that his style of management is becoming increasingly outdated and, consequently, increasingly ineffective.

The dispute with John Magnier over the racehorse Rock of Gibraltar is a symptom of an underlying problem at Old Trafford, namely that Ferguson is an all-powerful football man at a club where the shareholders' interests come first.

I disagree with your statement that Ferguson has not been personally involved in the development of young players. The United youth team of the early 1990s produced a host of talented players, namely David Beckham, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, the Neville brothers and Nicky Butt. Ferguson was closely involved in supervising that team and I know of no other manager who takes such an active interest in the recruitment and development of young players.

Beckham may have fallen out with Ferguson but he still credits his former manager with playing a crucial role in his career.

United must be concerned that Ferguson has fallen out with many older, more high-profile players (Beckham, Juan Veron, Fabien Barthez), and appears happier working with younger, impressionable players, hence the signing of Cristiano Ronaldo, Tim Howard and others this summer.

Please mark your correspondence 'Letters page' and send to:
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THE WORLD NEXT MONTH

Sat, February 14
Malta v Moldova (friendly, Valletta)
Belarus v Estonia (friendly, Valletta)

Mon, February 16
Malta v Estonia (friendly, Valletta)
Belarus v Moldova (friendly, Valletta)

Wed, February 18
Malta v Belarus (friendly, Valletta)
Estonia v Moldova (friendly, Valletta)
Hungary v Armenia (friendly, Paphos)
Albania v Sweden (friendly, Tirana)
Jamaica v Uruguay (friendly, Kingston)
Israel v Azerbaijan (friendly, Tel Aviv)
Turkmenistan v Sri Lanka (World Cup qualifier, Ashgabat)
Saudi Arabia v Indonesia (World Cup qualifier, Riyadh)
Vietnam v Maldives (World Cup qualifier, Hanoi)
South Korea v Lebanon (World Cup qualifier, Suwon)
Kyrgyzstan v Tajikistan (World Cup qualifier, Bishkek)
Bahrain v Syria (World Cup qualifier, Muharraq)
Yemen v North Korea (World Cup qualifier, Sana'a)
United Arab Emirates v Thailand (World Cup qualifier, Al Ain City)
Malaysia v Hong Kong (World Cup qualifier, Kuantan)
China v Kuwait (World Cup qualifier, Guangzhou)
India v Singapore (World Cup qualifier, Margao)
Japan v Oman (World Cup qualifier, Saitama)
Palestine v Taiwan (World Cup qualifier, Doha)
Uzbekistan v Iraq (World Cup qualifier, Tashkent)
Jordan v Laos (World Cup qualifier, Amman)
Iran v Qatar (World Cup qualifier, Tehran)
Honduras v Lithuania (friendly, San Pedro Sula)
Poland v Slovenia (friendly, San Fernando)
Italy v Czech Republic (friendly, Palermo)
Rep Ireland v Brazil (friendly, Dublin)
Northern Ireland v Norway (friendly, Belfast)
Trinidad & Tobago v Zambia (friendly, Northampton)
Wales v Scotland (friendly, Cardiff)
US Virgin Islands v St Kitts & Nevis (World Cup qualifier, St Thomas/St John)
Holland v United States (friendly, Amsterdam)
Haiti v Turks & Caicos Islands (World Cup qualifier, Miami)
Antigua & Barbuda v Dutch Antilles (World Cup qualifier, St John's)
Grenada v Guyana (World Cup qualifier, St George's)
Venezuela v Australia (friendly, Caracas)
Mexico v Chile (friendly, Los Angeles)
Morocco v Switzerland (friendly, Rabat)
Turkey v Denmark (friendly, Adana)
Spain v Peru (friendly, Barcelona)
Portugal v England (friendly, Loule)
Belgium v France (friendly, Brussels)
Croatia v Germany (friendly, Split)

Fri, February 20
El Salvador v Chile (friendly, San Salvador)

Sat, February 21
Poland v Faroe Islands (friendly, San Fernando)
Turks & Caicos Islands v Haiti (World Cup qualifier, Hialeah)

Sun, February 22
British Virgin Islands v St Lucia (World Cup qualifier, Tortola)
Cayman Islands v Cuba (World Cup qualifier, Grand Cayman)

Tue/Wed, February 24/25
UEFA Champions League 2nd rnd, 1st legs

Thu, February 26
UEFA Cup 3rd rnd, 1st legs

Sat, February 28
Aruba v Surinam (World Cup qualifier, Oranjestad)

Sun, February 29
Bermuda v Montserrat (World Cup qualifier, Hamilton)

Wed, March 3
UEFA Cup 3rd rnd, 2nd legs

Tue/Wed, March 9/10
UEFA Champions League 2nd rnd, 2nd legs

Wed, March 10
Mexico v Venezuela (friendly, Chiapas)

Sun, March 14
Guyana v Grenada (World Cup qualifier, Blairmont)

WORLD SOCCER

NEXT MONTH

2004 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

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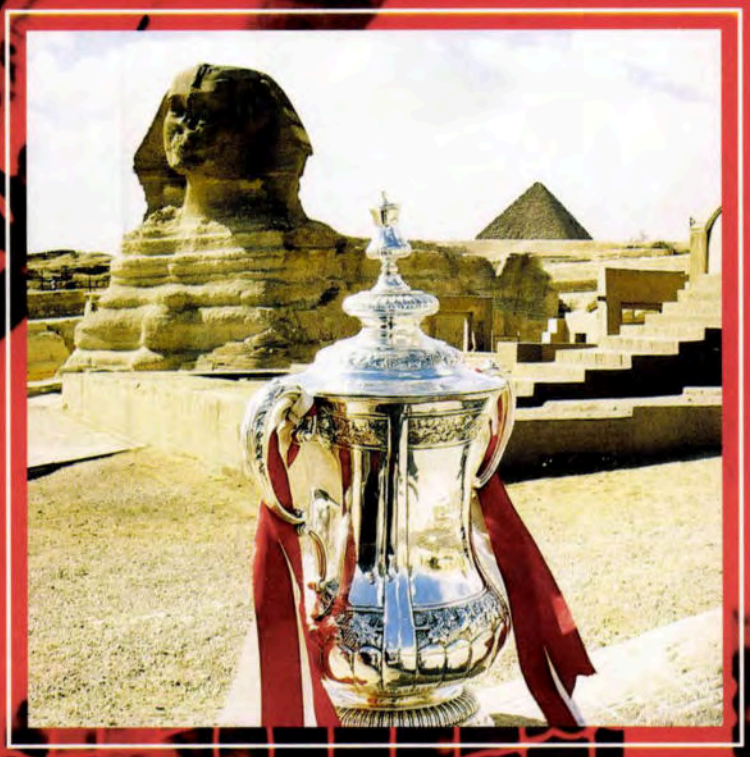

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